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Piratical Debauchery, Homesick Sailors, and Nautical Rhythms: The Influence of Sea Shanties on Classical Music

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Piratical Debauchery, Homesick Sailors, and Nautical Rhythms:
The Influence of Sea Shanties on Classical Music

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Music

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Come all you young sailormen, listen to me.

I'll sing you a song of the fish in the sea,
and it's...

*Windy weather, boys, stormy weather, boys,
When the wind blows, we're all together, boys,
Blow ye winds westerly, blow, ye winds, blow,
Jolly Sou'wester, boys, steady she goes.*

~ Traditional

Table of Contents

Introduction: Serenading Sea-dogs and Swashbuckling Songsters	4
The Sea Shanty	5
I. Echoes of Ancient Seafarers: A Condensed History of Sea Shanties	6
II. Cross-Cultural Origins of the Sea Shanty: Delving Briefly into Ethnomusicological Territories	13
Musical Examples of Sea Shanties	18
III. The Swashbuckler Identity	20
An Abridged History of Traditional Piracy	21
Henry Purcell's <i>Dido and Aeneas</i>	24
Musical Examples for <i>Dido and Aeneas</i>	28
IV. The Spectral Vessel and its Cursèd Captain: <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , by Richard Wagner ..	29
The <i>Dutchman</i> Cambiata	41
Musical Examples for <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i>	43
Two <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> Piano Transcriptions by Franz Liszt	48
Musical Examples for Liszt's Piano Transcriptions	58
V. Bedeviled and Bewitched: <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> , by Richard Wagner	61
Operatic "Realism"	68
Musical Examples for <i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	72
VI. <i>The Captain's Apprentice</i> , and Other Folk Favorites: <i>Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1</i> , by Ralph Vaughan Williams	75
Musical Examples for <i>Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1</i>	80
VII. Jingoistic Tendencies and the Unifying Effect of Sorrow: <i>Billy Budd</i> , by Benjamin Britten	82
Musical Examples for <i>Billy Budd</i>	91
An Education in Nautical Negligence: <i>Peter Grimes</i> , by Benjamin Britten	94
VIII. The Future of the Classical Maritime Genre	99
Glossary	102
Appendix: Lyrics	104
Bibliography	111

Introduction: Serenading Sea-dogs and Swashbuckling Songsters

Bawdy ballads of pirates and swashbuckling buccaneers have mesmerized society for generations. Western cultures seem drawn to melancholy tales of doomed nautical romance and treasure troves, displaying an ineradicable obsession with the sea that appears inherent to human identity. This fixation with nautical themes has led to the Romanticization of criminal confederations like that of traditional piracy.

Music was particularly important to pirates and other voyagers of the sea, if only due to the respite it afforded from the monotony of the ocean and the poor conditions of sea-faring life. Musical instruments were some of the most prized possessions aboard pirate vessels and many ships even had their own musicians on board.¹ One of the most (in)famous examples of this is Bartholomew “Black Bart” Roberts (1682-1722), who “collected” musicians to play popular melodies for him and his crew.² However, while some sailing vessels had career musicians on board, many did not; it was often left to the crew to provide their own music. In general, music on board nautical vessels served two primary purposes: to provide entertainment for the crew and to unify their labor for maximum efficiency. Of the several musical genres heard on ships, sea shanties were the most prevalent, typically sung by sailors as they performed their routine tasks.³

¹ John Farman, *The Short and Bloody History of Pirates* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2002), 64.

² Aubrey Burl, *Black Bart: The Real Pirate of the Caribbean* (Gloucestershire, UK: History, 2006), ix.

³ In the literature dedicated to this musical classification, the term is spelled “shanty,” “chantey” or “chanty,” depending on which school of thought a writer belongs to. The spelling “chanty” indicates that the writer believes the origin of the word comes directly from the English word “chant.” It is a similar case with the spelling “chantey,” except the etymology of the word is traced further back to *chantez* or *chanter* (French, “to sing”). The final spelling, “shanty,” is believed to be more in line with the “true”

The Sea Shanty

An accepted definition of the sea shanty has yet to be settled upon. It is generally conceded that this musical form originated as a subclass of the labor song—a song that has “a real utilitarian purpose.”⁴ However, while some historians use the terms “sea shanty” and “sea song” synonymously (partially due to the fact that sea shanties and other forms of nautical music were “jumbled together higgled-piggledy” at the time of use), others consider them to be entirely different, strongly arguing that the “sea song” is similar to the art-song in that it has “no conscious utilitarian purpose whatever beyond that of being a source of convivial entertainment,” and that “sailors sang shanties only when at work; never by way of recreation.”⁵ Many Classical composers used these terms synonymously and I will follow their example. Since I examine the influence of sea shanties on Classical composition, it is important to consider the term “sea shanty” as composers would have, without dismissing certain melodies as missing the “required” characteristics (that is, their existence within the context of labor) of the musical form.

shellback pronunciation of the term. It was also the first spelling to appear in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In favor of auditory authenticity (i.e. authentic pronunciation), I have opted to use “shanty.”

⁴ William Saunders, “Sailor Songs and Songs of the Sea,” *The Musical Quarterly*, 14/3 (1928), 346.

⁵R. R. Terry, “Sailor Shanties. I,” *Music & Letters*, 1/1 (1920), 26; Saunders, “Sailor Songs,” 345; Terry, “Sailor Shanties,” 35.

I. Echoes of Ancient Seafarers: A Condensed History of Sea Shanties

Sea shanties were “popularized” out of a demand for morale-lifting, rhythmically steady music.⁶ Although the precise origins of this musical genre are difficult to determine, there are several credible theories. One such theory is that its demand was due to a rise in popularity of the general sailing vessel. Another theory attributes it more specifically to the rise in popularity of vessels like the galley and oared galliot, which originated in the sixteenth century amongst the pirates of the Mediterranean. These ships had masts (or a single mast, in the case of the galliots) with lateen sails, which allowed them to take advantage of the wind. They also had a number of oars for the contingency of calm winds. While most vessels on the water relied on gallery slaves for propulsion, true pirate vessels used free men as oarsmen. The use of oars, as well as many of the other acts of maritime labor (e.g. adjusting the sails), would have required a heightened unification of rhythm. Yet another origin theory is that the demand for unifying song was a result of “packet ships,” popularized following the War of 1812.⁷ “Packet ships” were large merchant vessels with small crews for whom efficiency was paramount.

There are also several less-established theories regarding the origins of the sea shanty. Although there is little evidence to support this, some historians argue that the maritime musical form can be traced as far back as Ancient Egypt around the time traditional piracy itself originated. Thomas Wood (1892-1950), a colorful chronicler of maritime musical

⁶ Harold Whates describes the efficacy (and necessity) of such music: “Rowing men know the mysterious ‘form’ that will suddenly transform a good crew into an unbeatable eight functioning as a perfect machine.” See “The Background of Sea Shanties,” *Music & Letters*, 18/3 (1937), 262.

⁷ Gibb Schreffler, “Twentieth-Century Editors and the Re-envisioning of Chanties: A Case Study of ‘Lowlands,’” *The Nautilus: A Maritime Journal of Literature, History, and Culture*, 5/1 (2014), 10.

traditions, theorizes that sea shanties have existed “probably since the day when somebody pushed out in a hollow log to find out what was over the sky-line. If he was happy he would howl; if he was not happy he would howl until he was; when he and his mate had a job to do they found they did it better if they howled together.”⁸

In each of these scenarios, the sea shanty ensured the unified, rhythmical operation of rowing and other methods of momentum. Indeed, one of the more popular shellback sayings of the nineteenth century reports that “a shanty is another hand on the rope.”⁹ This sentiment is corroborated in the works of nautical chroniclers like James Gaby, who recalled that “two shanty pulls were always worth three that were silent.”¹⁰

William Saunders offers this origin theory of the sea shanty in his article, “Sailor Songs and Songs of the Sea” (1928):

Simultaneous action can only be attained by some method of beating time, and this was early evolved in the long drawn out “Yo-hoy-ho, Yo-hoy-ho” of the sailor as he hauled at the rope or turned the capstan in the never-ending labors of his life afloat... In that “Yo-hoy-ho,” we find the germ of the true shanty.¹¹

The rhythm of the traditional maritime work song created a unity of movement among the sailors in an effort to facilitate efficient labor. The manner in which the melodies mimic a

⁸ Thomas Wood, “Music and Action,” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 73 (1946-1947), 86.

⁹ William Doerflinger, *Shantymen and Shantyboys: Songs of the Sailor and Lumberman* (New York: MacMillan, 1951), xxvi.

¹⁰ Heather M. Vose, “Song My Father Taught Me: Shanties of the Square Riggers,” *The Great Circle*, 9/2 (1987), 111.

¹¹ Saunders, “Sailor Songs,” 339; According to William Falconer’s *An Universal Dictionary of the Marine* (1769), the phrase “Yo-ho” was “a cry which answers to yoe-hoe.” Perhaps the origination of the dual repetitions of “Yo-ho, Yoe-hoe” in popular and traditional maritime (and pop-culture “maritime”) songs (“yoho, int.” Oxford English Dictionary).

feeling of hauling suggests that they were used to motivate men during activities such as rowing, the raising and lowering of the yard, or the hauling of ropes.¹²

Just as the origin of this musical form is closely tied to the maritime vessels on which it was performed, the disappearance of such vessels is primarily responsible for the Romanticized hue that has long colored the sea shanty since the end of the eighteenth century. Harold Whates, a musicologist who has explored the history of sea shanties, outlines this discrepancy between intention and recollection, stating that the “disappearance of the sailing ship that was the sole reason for these songs has coincided with a sentimental interest in the vanished craft and in the shanties and sea songs of the sailing-ship era—a romantic interest that was utterly foreign to the spirit and purpose of songs of labor.”¹³ Given the Romanticized view of sea shanties, sea ballads, and other forms of maritime music, Classical composers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries began to incorporate more maritime musical forms into their compositions, perhaps hoping to inspire recollections of nautical melancholy and swashbuckling buccaneers.

In this thesis, I study nautically-themed works composed between 1680-1960 in order to make observations regarding Classical composers’ contributions to the “movement” of nautical Romanticization. Classical composers adopted a bilateral approach when attempting to include sea shanties in their works: they either incorporated quotes from traditional, pre-existing sea shanties or they mimicked the style within their own original shanty-like compositions. The latter method was most common due to the difficulty of including quotations from “authentic” sea shanties. In most cases, although the lyrics of nautical songs were well preserved, the tunes were not; these were often left out of records or notated in their barest

¹² Saunders. “Sailor Songs,” 339.

¹³ Whates, “The Background of Sea Shanties,” 259.

outlines. In his article “Sailor Songs and Songs of the Sea,” Saunders unveils the “earliest ship-shanty in existence,” lamenting that although “we have the shanty in all its perfection, with the shantyman and chorus complete... the tune is wanting.”¹⁴ As noted by Whates, “sailors seldom had the instinctive musical sensibility to preserve... a melody.”¹⁵ The English musicologist R. R. Terry agrees with Whates, observing that, “when it came to taking them down from the seamen’s singing the results were deplorable.”¹⁶

These critical judgements stem from individuals for whom the preservation and study of melody was paramount. While the lack of “melodic” conservation is frustrating, one cannot fault sailors and early shanty collectors for privileging words above music. The fluidity of the melodic structure rendered the tunes difficult to transcribe, even when shanties were regularly sung aboard nautical vessels. This was primarily because every sailor’s interpretation of a shanty differed in one way or another. Furthermore, the “scientific” method of song collection that would have been required for an even partially comprehensive shanty collection to emerge was not in place during the “Golden Age” of the sailing vessel, 1600-1900.¹⁷ The frequency with which *texts* were chronicled increased during the eighteenth century in the wake of a series of naval victories and high-profile piratical arrests which drew attention to seafaring lives and traditions.¹⁸ This shift in perspective did not, however, lead to a significant increase in *melodic*

¹⁴ Saunders, “Sailor Songs,” 340; This “earliest” ship shanty was found within a *quasi*-journalistic work published in 1549 in which the author describes how he came across “ane grit schip,” whereupon he witnessed the practice of shanty-singing in its natural habitat (“as ane cryit, al the laif cryit in that samyn tune... ande so it aperit to me, thai cryit thir vordis as efter follouis”). See lyrics in *Appendix*.

¹⁵ Whates, “The Background of Sea Shanties,” 261.

¹⁶ Terry, “Sailor Shanties,” 36.

¹⁷ Different scholars have varying opinions of when exactly this “Golden Age” took place. A dependable source is Stephen R. Bown, *Merchant Kings* (London: Thomas Dunne Books, 2010).

¹⁸ Saunders, “Sailor Songs,” 341.

chronicling. Traditional musical forms like the sea shanty were preserved most prevalently through oral tradition. Consequently, most of the literature on this subject is written secondhand by authors, historians, and ethnomusicologists interviewing sailors as they reminisce about the “good old days.” These accounts present problems of accuracy, since recollection relies on the often-compromised memories of aging seamen.

Scholars of the shanty have formed strong opinions regarding the integration of maritime music into Classical composition. Whates, for example, argues that “there are still thousands of men in middle life and older who sang these songs in their youth and who can tell at once the essential falsity of much that is served out to concert and wireless audiences. There is no excuse for this slovenly distortion.”¹⁹ Saunders adopts a related position on the matter, stating that he “must strongly deprecate the modern tendency to ‘arrange’ these crude, ingenuous and unpretentious outpourings of uncultured artistry, as songs for concert and drawing-room consumption.”²⁰ Saunders and Whates both disapprove of the “reclaiming” of the sea shanty in Classical music, although the reasons for their beliefs are orthogonal. Whates believes that the adoption of sea songs in Classical settings betrays the origins of the traditional musical form; Saunders believes that the sea shanty form is too “primitive” and “uncultured” to be reformatted to fit a Classical style.²¹ Wood, ever the loyal mariner, defends this aspect of sea shanties in arguing that “by our standards, [sailors’] lives were hard beyond imagining. So you could scarcely expect their singing and their shanties to be pretty-pretty.”²² These conflicting

¹⁹ He made this comment in an article published in 1937; Whates, “The Background of Sea Shanties,” 259.

²⁰ Saunders, “Sailor Songs,” 344.

²¹ Whates does acknowledge that in Classical settings of the maritime musical form, one loses the inherent beauty and purity of the sea shanty itself.

²² Wood, “Music and Action,” 88.

attitudes opposing musical synthesis and transculturation are often classified by ethnomusicologists as “ethnocentric musical prejudices,” where musical synthesis results in a twofold rejection: a dismissal “caused by an emotional resistance to the ‘borrowing’ of musical ideas from a ‘barbarian’ people,” and a rejection that is due to a “culture’s concern for its own cultural ‘purity.’”²³ While Whates and Saunders disagree about the implications of the sea shanty within Classical works, their attitudes of disapproval and deprecation provide us with a credible explanation for the relative scarcity of explicit sea shanty settings in Classical music.

The goal of my thesis is not to debate the viability of sea shanty quotations within Classical music, but to offer a simple overview of how the sea shanty has been presented in the Classical canon. In so doing, I examine the extent to which composers have been drawn to this aspect of maritime culture. Such determinations provide the means for recognizing many nautically-rooted themes and stylizations in music influenced by the maritime. They also allow us to examine how the appearance of the sea shanty within a Classical context has contributed to the Romanticization of traditional seafaring and, through this, affected Western attitudes towards maritime life. A consideration of how literary, historical, and musical themes alluding to the nautical have been received provides insights into the psychology of audiences at key moments in history.

Given their location at the fringes of society, pirates and sailors have been thought to embody the concept of “freedom”— something which European society has longed for at various moments in history. Works like Richard Wagner’s *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tristan und Isolde* demonstrate this tendency to tint nautical life with a rose-colored perspective. The

²³ Margaret Kartomi, “The Processes and Results of Musical Culture Contact: A Discussion of Terminology and Concepts,” *Ethnomusicology*, 25/2 (1981), 227, 235

fantastical, artistic re-imagination of what was, in reality, a grim life, offered a sense of momentary escapism for audiences who were otherwise bound by the rules of society. Likewise, the gradual shift towards an appreciation of authenticity with respect to the “historical” setting of nautical life demonstrates a sense of disillusionment with the idealistic perspective that piratical adventure-epics tend to adopt. Operatic works like Benjamin Britten’s *Billy Budd* and *Peter Grimes* place emphases upon the “grittier” aspects of the maritime universe—betrayal, torture, loss—partially as a result of a composer’s desire to inform the audience of the “dangers” that idealism and escapism can pose. The widespread acceptance and general popularity of such works serves as an indication of a general societal shift away from Romanticism and towards realism—a reformation of collective values that often occurs after periods of intense economical and martial strife.

II. Cross-Cultural Origins of the Sea Shanty: Delving Briefly into Ethnomusicological Territories

According to sea-music historians like Stan Hugill and Arthur Hamilton Clark, global expansion played a significant role in the development of the sea shanty as a popular maritime musical form. The styles of sea songs were shaped by the shipping routes that formed during the Age of Heroic Commerce, connecting Western Europe, the Americas, the West Indies, and Africa.²⁴ Since ports of call were social hubs and trading centers for material goods, cultural philosophies, and traditional music, these sites served as meeting grounds for “white men’s songs and shanties and Negro songs and work-songs” where sailors would leave “after being hammered into shanties by the Negroes, and Negro work-songs from ashore would be taken by white sailors and added to their repertoire for halyard and capstan.”²⁵ Frequent visitation to areas with a high density of former and current slaves led to the “adoption of negro themes and idioms” by sailors and the like.²⁶ As Clark notes, many sea shanties originated “with the negro

²⁴ It is important to note that the question of African influence upon aspects of Western culture (e.g. music) is often debated, “with much of the dispute centering on arcane methodological and theoretical issues.” See Ted Gioia, *History of Jazz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 11. I advise my reader to keep this in mind when encountering following references to generic “African” influence upon the sea shanty repertoire.

²⁵ Stan Hugill, *Songs of the Sea: The Tales and Tunes of Sailors and Sailing Ships* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), 17; The musical exchange did not merely flow in one direction: many African songs and musical forms demonstrate European influences. Songs in the traditional blues style, for example, often display European and West African structures, and many “black spirituals” were “essentially European in melodic character.” For more, see John F. Garst, “Mutual Reinforcement and the Origins of Spirituals,” *American Music*, 4/4 (1986), 398.

²⁶ Saunders, “Sailor Songs,” 341.

stevedores at Mobile and New Orleans, who sung them while screwing cotton bales into the holds of the American packet ships; this was where the packet sailors learned them.”²⁷ The concept of sea shanties as originating from African melodies is a popular theory among historians concerned with maritime song. American journalist William Alden (1837-1908) wrote that many sea shanties “caught the true spirit of the African melodies... [which] could never have been the songs of civilized men. They breathe the wild freedom of the jungle, and are as elusive as the furrow left by a ship on the trackless ocean.”²⁸ Indeed, popular melodies like that of the 1924 “Sugar in the Hold” shanty display overtly “African” influence through their use of minor pentatonic (“blues”) scales and polyrhythms (see Example 1).

African song (as typecast by Alden) was not the only genre of music that influenced the sea shanty canon. The diversity of music heard along international trade routes allowed sea shanties to adopt various strains: Irish, English, and those influenced by the “Negro work-songs from ashore.”²⁹ All three strains developed from comparatively common forms of traditional music. While the latter stems from African labor songs, sea song descendants of the British Isles often evolved from folk song (as explained in later chapters).

Sea shanties can be categorized by form as well as by national origin. The structure, pace, and rhythm of each shanty was dictated by the types of labor performed during the

²⁷ Arthur Hamilton Clark, *The Clipper Ship Era: An Epitome of Famous American and British Clipper Ships, Their Owners, Builders, Commanders, and Crews, 1843-1869* (London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1912), 110.

²⁸ Schreffler, “Twentieth-Century Editors,” 12.

²⁹ Charles Seeman, *Sea Music of Many Lands: The Pacific Heritage* (New York: Folkways Records & Service Corp., 1981), 2.

song.³⁰ Short-drag shanties, sung while short dragging on ropes, were extremely rhythmic with short vocal lines. One of the most famous short-drag shanties is “Haul Away Joe” (see Example 2). According to Doerflinger and Hugill, this shanty was used to sheet in the foresail; the sailors would pull on “Joe,” shouting or grunting the word. Halyard shanties, used when raising the halyards (a task more sustained than short-dragging on rope) had slightly longer vocal lines, often with a verse and refrain structure. “Drunken Sailor,” perhaps the most famous sea shanty of all-time, is a halyard shanty (see Example 3). Capstan (either vertical or windlass) shanties were sung during the extremely long—yet low-intensity—task of walking around the capstan to raise the anchor. They have long verses and choruses with slow, steady rhythms.³¹ “Shanghai Brown” is a capstan shanty that chronicles a dark time in recent maritime history (Example 4).³² During the California gold rush (mid-nineteenth-century), groups from Shanghai roamed the Pacific Coast, preying on unsuspecting men by drugging them and forcing them onto crew ships.³³

³⁰ Kelby Rose, like several other shanty scholars, advocates for the separation of sea shanties into two groups: those to be used during ‘hauling,’ and those for use during ‘heaving.’ See “Nostalgia and Imagination in Nineteenth-century Sea Shanties,” *The Mariner’s Mirror*, 98/2 (2012).

³¹ Regina F. Bendix, and Galit Hasan-Rokem, *A Companion to Folklore* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 469.

³² See lyrics in *Appendix*.

³³ “[They were given] a brew comprised of whiskey, brandy, gin, opium, or even cigars laced with opium, along with other drugs that guaranteed a knockout for at least twelve hours... Men of all walks of life could awaken and find themselves in involuntary servitude at sea in a strange vessel minus their wages—and most of their clothing. Those who were shanghaied made the long journey to Hong Kong; there they would catch a ship back to the West Coast, but if the sailor went as far as Shanghai, he was compelled to continue the voyage around the world.” See Christopher Fee, *American Myths, Legends, and Tall Tales: An Encyclopedia of American Folklore* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2015), 853.

One function of the sea shanty was to sustain rhythmic momentum throughout a task. This was especially relevant to short-drag and halyard shanties. Another function of the sea shanty was to relieve boredom during tedious tasks—capstan shanties were used in such instances. Some sea shanties adopted a call and response form where the shantyman (the leader of songs, a position of pride) would sing one line, and the rest of the crew would sing the next. This type of shanty was often used for tasks like hoisting the sails.³⁴

After a few rounds of established verses and choruses, the shantyman often sang *impromptu* verses, which were improvised upon issues that seemed relevant to the moment, such as “shipping, politics, personal characteristics, and food.”³⁵ The role of the shantyman was not only to lead the crew in song, but also to coordinate the pace with the rhythmic rolling of the ship, the creaking of the wood, and the clinking of the capstan.³⁶

Forecastle songs (otherwise known as “forebitters” or “fo’c’sle”) are a somewhat contested classification of sea shanties because they were not sung during acts of labor and cannot, therefore, be considered “work songs.” Forebitters were often sung in the evening, for entertainment or relaxation after the work was completed. This shanty subclass demonstrates the blurred distinction between the classification of “sea song” and “sea shanty.” While forebitters can be considered “sea shanties” because they encourage a degree of levity or comradery amongst the crew, they also seem to defy the term because they are not work songs.

³⁴ Marek Korczynski, “Music at Work: Towards a Historical Overview,” *Folk Music Journal*, 8/3 (2003), 217.

³⁵ “Sea Songs and Shanties,” *Musical Times*, 56/869 (1915), 416.

³⁶ Vose, “Song My Father Taught Me: Shanties of the Square Riggers,” 110.

In some texts, Forebitters are classified as “sea ballads,” as they often closely resemble art songs.³⁷

Certain shanties have been assigned, either directly by the sailors themselves or by those who chronicle them, to certain tasks around the ship.³⁸ There was, however, an element of flexibility to the art form. It was the shantyman’s prerogative, if he thought the circumstances warranted it, to choose the sea shanty to be sung during any given activity of labor. Interestingly, such flexibility is also evident in the sea shanty’s extra-maritime function and setting. We will be examining this further in subsequent chapters.

³⁷ To further classificational confusion, Rose describes an “English manuscript written during the mid-fifteenth century [that] mentions what has been described as a ‘sea ballad’... [containing] the phrase ‘Hale the bowelyne, Now vere the shete.’” This song was evidently meant for use during labor, despite its classification as a “ballad.” See Rose, “Nostalgia and Imagination in Nineteenth-century Sea Shanties,” 150.

³⁸ For examples of when certain types of shanties might be used for the various tasks on board the ship, see Vose, “Songs My Father Taught Me.”

Musical Examples of Sea Shanties

EXAMPLE 1: FIRST PHRASE OF THE 1924 SHANTY, “SUGAR IN THE HOLD.” NOTE ITS POLYRHYTHMS AND USE OF THE HEXATONIC (“BLUES”) SCALE.

Wish I _ was _ in _ Mo-bile _ Bay _ screw-ing co-tton _ all _ of the day,

But I'm _ stow _ ing _ su-gar in the hold, be - low be - low be - low.

The musical notation is in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of two staves. The first staff contains the first line of the shanty, and the second staff contains the second line. The melody is characterized by its polyrhythms and use of the hexatonic ("blues") scale.

EXAMPLE 2: “HAUL AWAY JOE,” A SHORT-DRAG SHANTY IN WHICH THE SHANTYMAN SINGS A VERSE, FOLLOWED BY THE CREW WITH A REFRAIN.

Shantyman Crew

Whin Oi wuz a li-ttle boy an' so me mo-ther told me, 'Way haul a-way, we'll haul a-way Joe!

The musical notation is in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of two staves. The first staff is labeled 'Shantyman' and the second staff is labeled 'Crew'. The melody is characterized by its short-drag structure, with the shantyman singing a verse followed by the crew singing a refrain.

EXAMPLE 3: FIRST VERSE OF THE FAMOUS “DRUNKEN SAILOR” SHANTY. BOTH THE VERSE AND THE REFRAIN ARE SET TO THE SAME MELODY. THIS STROPHIC VERSE AND REFRAIN STRUCTURE IS TYPICAL OF A HALYARD.

What shall we do with a drun-ken sai - lor, what shall we do with a drun-ken sai - lor,

what shall we do with a drun-ken sai - lor, ear - ly in the mor - ning?

The musical notation is in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of two staves. The first staff contains the first line of the shanty, and the second staff contains the second line. The melody is characterized by its strophic structure, with the verse and refrain set to the same melody.

EXAMPLE 4: FIRST VERSE OF "SHANGHAI BROWN," A CAPSTAN SHANTY.

When first I we-nt to Fris-co bo-ys, I went u-pon a spree, My hard earned cash, I
spent it fast, I got drunk as drunk could be Be-fore me mo-ney was all gone, or spent on
some old whore, I made up me mind and was well-in-cli-ned to go to sea no more.

The musical score is written on three staves in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 3/4 time. The melody is simple and rhythmic, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff contains the first line of the verse, the second staff contains the second line, and the third staff contains the third line. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests. The lyrics are written in a simple, sans-serif font, with hyphens used to indicate syllables across measures.

III. The Swashbuckler Identity

One purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationship between Romanticized accounts of nautical life and Classical “mainlander” adoptions of the sea shanty. Maritime lore is rife with tales of individuals who live with a sense of autonomy. Independence from conventional constraints (demonstrated through the freedom to travel, the tendency to break laws, etc.) was a point of fascination for audiences in particularly restrictive and rule-laden societies. Accounts of Romanticized nautical adventure—whether experienced through the written word, upon the stage, or in a work of music—were a means of escapism for those feeling stifled by societal convention. Furthermore, the popularity of works displaying autonomy through nautical Romanticism demonstrates the extent of the collective longing that has existed in our Western societies.³⁹

One significant figurehead for such escapism is the figure of The Pirate. Most people have their own perception of pirates: hard and ruthless a-L'Ollonnais, driven to piracy by desperation like the Somali pirates of our time, or swashbucklers (Byronic Pirates, if you will). The slurredly charming Captain Jack Sparrow of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise is a caricaturized example of the latter.⁴⁰ Of these, the swashbuckler is the most important public

³⁹ Lord Byron's *The Corsair* (1814) is an example of such radial popularity. It was his most popular work, outselling both *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*. See William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 216-218.

⁴⁰ L'Ollonnais (“the flail of the Spaniards”) was a crazed, craven buccaneer who had a penchant for barbarity. He reportedly met his end as a victim of a cannibalistic tribe. During one doomed-from-the-start attack, L'Ollonnais only escaped death by lying very still among the corpses until dark.

piratical persona in that it has entranced the public more than any other piratical stereotype (as we shall see).

Stereotypes occupy a powerful position in Western societies. Many are benign, some are harmful, and a few have been powerful enough to change history. As an example of the latter, the public persona of The Sailor (“Jack Tar”) was circulated through forms of print media, originating as an actively disseminated stereotype of nautical folk. “Maritime” language was utilized to create the perception of sailors as hardened, sea-obsessed people. However, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, nautical folk began to symbolize the American nation (freedom, commerce, etc.). As such, Jack Tar came to play a large role in key events of the American revolution; public letters and declarations rejecting British imperialism (published under the Jack Tar pseudonym) incorporated “maritime” language to assert nautical “authenticity.”

While they may have had less overtly political or historical effects, stereotypes of nautical culture have been used in Classical music to symbolize similar concepts: individuality, freedom, the power of a unified group, etc. Although, in this thesis, I focus primarily on the ability of sea shanties to generally “unify,” the effects of nautical stereotypes upon a disillusioned society is a secondary interest. Just as discontent with British imperialism was evident through the use of Jack Tar, nautical stereotypes and portrayals of piratical figures in Classical music have the potential to reveal the sentiments of an era.

An Abridged History of Traditional Piracy

The most renowned piratical figures in history are famous because of their extraordinary (and often exaggerated) exploits. Many of these figures have been immortalized

in a variety of ways. The Lukkans, the first known piratical group (fourteenth century BCE), were memorialized as piratical forefathers in the annals of nautical history by Egyptian scribes.⁴¹ References to the Cretan pirates, who established the first known pirate haven (on Crete) and used it to launch attacks throughout the Aegean Sea, can be found in Homer's *Odyssey*.⁴² Young Julius Caesar's capture by Cilician pirates in 75 BCE has been immortalized by a Greek historian who described the events of Caesar's capture, release, and revenge.⁴³ Exploits of the notorious Black Monk (or "Eustace the Monk") have been preserved in a French poem written in 1284. The adventures of the sixteenth-century female pirate, Gráinne Ní Mháille (or, as she is more commonly known, Grace O'Malley, Sea Queen of Connemara) are memorialized in Irish legend.

One of the most interesting cases of piratical immortalization is Klaus Störtebeker (rough translation: "empty the mug with one gulp"). Störtebeker was active in the late fourteenth century. He commanded a section of a brotherhood of pirates called the "Likedeelers" ("equal sharers") or the "Vitalienbrüder" ("Victual Brothers") and operated out of Helgoland, a small island in the North Sea. Störtebeker ultimately met his demise in 1401, during an altercation with a flagship named *Die Bunte Kuh* ("The Colorful Cow") and its fleet.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Angus Konstam, *Pirates: The Complete History from 1300 BC to the Present Day* (Guilford: Lyons Press, 2011), 10.

⁴² In lines 424–426 of book 17, Odysseus speaks of pirates to Antinous (a suitor vying for Penelope's hand): "But Zeus, son of Cronos, brought all to naught—so, I ween, was his good pleasure—who sent me forth with roaming pirates to go to Egypt, a far voyage, that I might meet my ruin." See Homer, *The Odyssey*, ed. A. T. Murray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919).

⁴³ Caesar reportedly "took the pirates out of prison and crucified the lot of them, just as he had often told them he would do when he was on the island and they imagined that he was joking." See Plutarch, *Fall of the Roman Republic* (London: Penguin, 2006), 2.7.

⁴⁴ Konstam, *Pirates: The Complete History*, 29.

The pirate and his crew were captured and transported to Hamburg to be tried and beheaded. Störtebeker reportedly struck a deal with the executioner: the crew was to be lined up next to the execution block, pardons granted to any crew member the captain could walk past after being beheaded. He allegedly made it past eleven of the crew before he fell—tripped by the executioner. Tourists can visit his impaled head in Hamburg and drink an eponymous German beer out of a “Störtebeker” mug. Henry Morgan, one of the greatest buccaneers of the seventeenth century, is similarly immortalized by the Henry Morgan brand of rum.⁴⁵

These accounts were ostensibly “selected” for immortalization due to their fantastical nature. Thus, our perception of piratical “reality” was skewed from the start. In fact, their entire genre of history has been concentrated into *The Most Exciting*, *The Most Entertaining*, and *The Most Adventurous*. It is no wonder that the piratical genre has been Romanticized to such an extent across Western history.

Assuming that the events reported are largely fact (and only partially “tall-tale-ized” for posterity), it is not difficult to fathom why nautical piracy is a subject that has withstood the often-ravaging effects of time and remained a topic of fascination for millions of people. Piratical history is an ideal topic to be Romanticized and preserved in the form of legend because it is naturally rife with adventure, excitement, and intrigue. It also happens to be a way of life that only a small percentage of the Western population has experienced. The life of the Swashbuckler is one that exists outside conventional reality. Furthermore, in societies as

⁴⁵ Morgan commenced his career as an indentured servant in Barbados. His gift for tactics was reportedly remarkable, ranging from the absurd (“Morgan had his men gather a human shield of nuns, friars, local gentlewomen, and even the mayor”) to borderline-genius (during his standoff with Admiral Campo in the lagoon near the Maracaibo Bar, he was able to escape capture by pretending to land on the San Carlos Peninsula).

constricted and confined as those of Europe in 1600-1900, tales of swashbucklers were especially compelling because they revolved around individuals who were in control of their actions and their destinies. Through the examination of Classical works influenced by such nautical Romanticism, we can observe a nation's desires and fascinations at play. In short, the Swashbuckler (and his reception) is a means of measuring the psychological state of society.

Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas

One of the earliest examples of Classical shanty-inclusion can be found in *Dido and Aeneas*, an opera by the English composer, Henry Purcell (1659-1695). The three-act tragic opera has a libretto written by Nahum Tate (1652-1715), an Irish poet infamous for his bowdlerized version of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. A study of this opera is especially useful for our purposes since it offers an excellent example of how sea shanties have been utilized in seventeenth-century Classical music. Although Purcell's work fell into disuse for some time after its first performances, it likely served as inspiration for many other compositions that explored nautical themes in dramatic contexts.

The opera is centered upon the tragic tale of eponymous lovers as laid out in the first four books of the Virgilian epic, the *Aeneid*. In the opening of Act I, Dido, Queen of Carthage, laments her precarious position.⁴⁶ Aeneas, with his motley band of Trojan refugees, has washed ashore upon her Carthaginian beaches, and she has fallen in love with him. However, she believes that this love calls her reputation as a strong monarch into question. Following eager

⁴⁶ In Hellenistic tradition, Dido is often referred to as "Elissa," daughter of King Muttou of Tyre, and sister of Pygmalion. Tragically, at present, such names are not common. (Guida Myrl Jackson-Laufer, *Women Rules Throughout the Ages: An Illustrated Guide* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 116.)

encouragement from her court attendants, Dido ultimately accepts Aeneas' proposal of marriage. Purcell's plot divulges from that of Virgil's in Act II, when a sorceress, plotting the destruction of Queen Dido, reveals her plan to send an "elf" disguised as Mercury to convince Aeneas to abandon his new bride and fulfill his destiny.⁴⁷ Consenting to the wishes of what he believes are the gods, Aeneas prepares for his departure from Carthage.

We hear Purcell's incorporation of sea shanties at the beginning of Act III, when the Trojan fleet prepares their departure from Carthaginian soil. The shanty-aria "Come Away, Fellow Sailors," sung by Aeneas' crew, serves as a model for subsequent "Classical" sea shanties in several respects. First, it retains the prevalent call-and-response structure of many traditional sea shanties: a lone sailor calls for his fellow crew-members to return to their ships, followed by a chorus in which the crew-members convert his lines into a shanty as they prepare for departure:

Come away, fellow sailors, come away,
Your anchors be weighing;
Time and tide will admit no delaying;
Take a bow, sey short leave of your nymphs on the shore,
And silence their mourning
With vows of returning
Tho' never intending to visit them more

These lines also narrow whatever gap may exist between representations of piratical figures and representations of sailors in the Classical tradition, portraying the latter as scoundrels who roam the seas, collecting and discarding inexperienced females ("nymphs"). This is our first example of the Swashbuckler in Classical compositions as a rakish, capricious man, up for good fun but ultimately beholden to the sea.

⁴⁷ Aeneas is destined to found a Great City (or "New Troy") on Latin/Italian soil.

To modern audiences, the most strikingly “piratical” characteristic within Purcell’s aria is its melody. The topic of piracy, in the modern sense, is not one that I set out to discuss in my thesis on “pirate” music. However, the two subjects are somewhat related at this juncture. A simple side-by-side comparison (see Example 5) of Purcell’s melody and a famous theme (aptly named “He’s a Pirate”) from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise (2003-present) illuminates a striking similarity. However, the issue of whether the theme was “stolen” is not what I would like to draw attention to. Obviously, by the time of the soundtrack’s composition, Purcell’s music was undoubtedly within public domain, and the composers at Media Ventures, whether they did so knowingly or not, were well within their rights to mimic the earlier sea shanty. What is most interesting about this similarity—taking into consideration the popularity of both the franchise’s soundtrack and Purcell’s opera—are the implications that a melody which inherently belongs to a certain tradition (in this case, the piratical or nautical) can exist.⁴⁸

Purcell’s opera is an excellent example of a “typical” portrayal of the Swashbuckler within Classical culture. It demonstrates many characteristics thought to belong to stereotypical nautical individuals in Purcell’s time. These stereotypes have persisted throughout the centuries, as evident in the works of later composers. As such, they belong as much to the list of nautical, Classical-music tropes as to any motivic or melodic feature. For instance, this trait of fickleness returns in several of the “nautical” operas that I will be examining. In Classical opera, a sailor’s romantic capriciousness is often supplanted by a sense of loyalty in love. This is similar to prevailing literary romances, where a scoundrel is “tamed” and transformed into a faithful gentleman. Wagner, ever the romantic, somewhat

⁴⁸ For more, see Peter Broadwell’s dissertation, *Swashbucklers on Stage: Musical Depictions of Pirates and Bandits in English Theater, 1650-1820* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2011).

autobiographically attempts to instill in his audiences that for such a transformation to take place, nothing less than supernatural intervention (e.g. a curse or a love-potion) is required.

While this admittedly small section of Purcell's opera is the only one in which the sea and sailors are directly involved, many other moments within *Dido and Aeneas* foreshadow characteristics that will be seen in subsequent nautically-themed operatic works. While this is, in part, because *Dido and Aeneas* demonstrates techniques that would become more commonplace within the operatic genre in the years following Purcell, we can attempt to cobble together an idea of what a "nautical" or "piratical" Classical composition might consist of through an examination of similarities between nautically-imbued compositions. The use of sea shanties, their structure, and the manner in which they convey the stereotypical characters of sailors or pirates must all be taken into consideration to gain a sense of how piratical and nautical themes have been adapted within Classical music.

Musical Examples for Dido and Aeneas

EXAMPLE 5: “COME AWAY, FELLOW SAILORS” FROM PURCELL’S *DIDO AND AENEAS*, AND “HE’S A PIRATE” FROM *PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN*. (DISCREPANCIES CIRCLED.)

Theme from Prelude of "Come Away, Fellow Sailors"

"He's a Pirate" Theme

IV. The Spectral Vessel and its Cursèd Captain: Der fliegende Holländer, by Richard Wagner

Nautical lore chronicles the tale of *The Flying Dutchman*, a phantom vessel carrying the portent of doom. As with any myth or legend, details of the tale differ from one account to another. In some versions, the captain of this phantom pirate ship is named: Van der Decken, Fokke, Kidd... In others, he either remains nameless or is given the affixation of the vessel that he commands. The Dutchman is occasionally said to return to shore once every ten years; in some accounts, it is seven; and in others, he is forbidden to return to land, cursed to roam the seas forever. In many versions of the tale, the crew is supposed guilty of a dreadful crime, “some horrid act of murder and piracy,” punished by a curse of pestilence and ordained to wander the waters on which they perish until they have served their penance.⁴⁹ Some historians argue that the tale of the Flying Dutchman is a mythical exaggeration of the actions of the seventeenth-century Dutch captain, Bernard Fokke (1600–1678), whose voyages between the Netherlands and Java were so swift that some believed him to be in league with the devil.⁵⁰ Samuel Coleridge (1772–1834), an English Romantic poet, used the legend as inspiration for his work, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) invoked the legend of *The Dutchman* in his satirical novel, *Aus den Memoiren des Herrn von Schnabelwopski* (*The Memoirs of Mister von Schnabelwopski*, 1833), where a character attends a theatrical performance of *The Flying Dutchman* in Amsterdam. In Heine’s version, the captain of *The Dutchman* is a cursed

⁴⁹ Sir Walter Scott, *Rokeby, A Poem* (Edinburgh: John Ballantyne & Co., 1813), xxxiv; John Leyden, *Scenes of Infancy: Descriptive of Teviotdale* (Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne, 1803), 175–6

⁵⁰ Florencio Zernel, *The Esoteric Codex: Curses* (Lulu, 2015), 51.

mariner who invokes Satan and is subsequently cursed to roam the stormy seas. Every seven years, his ship is cast upon the shores; if he marries a maiden who will be true to him, the entire crew of *The Dutchman* will be released from their doomed fate.

In the dreary depths of stormy nights, pirates and sailors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often muttered of the Flying Dutchman, expressing concern that they, too, would be trapped at sea forever. This was the case during the sea voyage undertaken by Richard Wagner (1813-1883), his wife, Minna, and their large Newfoundland, Robber, in July and August of 1839.⁵¹ After the termination of his post as *Kapellmeister* in the Latvian city of Riga, it became clear that any dodging of his (characteristically) substantial debt would result in incarceration. Hoping to avoid this, the profligate composer, his wife, and their dog fled the city by carriage in the middle of the night. Since Wagner's creditors had confiscated his passport, the couple was forced to smuggle aboard the *Thetis* (a trading vessel "of the smallest sort") for what was meant to be an eight day journey to London.⁵² A week and a half later, following a series of violent storms in the Skagerrack which had almost doubled the length of their journey, Wagner, Minna, and Robber found themselves in the Baltic Sea, listening to

⁵¹Ernest Newman, *The Wagner Operas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 29; Stanley Coren paints an amusing picture of Robber's inclusion in the "escape":

Picture a man fleeing for his life, but shaping the nature of his escape to fit the needs of bringing along a dog—not just any dog, but a huge 160-pound dog! One bark from the big black dog while they crossed the frontier could have brought a hail of gunfire down on them from the sentries... To avoid attracting attention, they decided to secretly haul Robber up the steep side of the vessel and hide him below decks... It was not a pleasant trip. The sea was rough, and both Minna and Robber suffered greatly from seasickness.

For more anecdotes about Richard and Robber Wagner, see Coren's book, *The Pawprints of History: Dogs in the Course of Human Events* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2002), 100-101.

⁵² Thomas S. Grey, *Richard Wagner: Der fliegende Holländer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.

sailors muttering of curses, *The Flying Dutchman*, and a lifetime on the waves.⁵³ Although this voyage caused a great deal of stress, it provided Wagner with an abundance of musical inspiration in a form of exposure that Thomas Grey calls nautical “musical-poetic coloring.”⁵⁴ In his autobiography, *Mein Leben (My Life)* (1870-1880), Wagner wrote:

The passage among the crags made a wonderful impression on my fancy; the legend of *The Flying Dutchman*, as I heard it confirmed from the seamen’s mouths, took on within me a distinct and peculiar color, which only the sea adventures I was experiencing could have given it.⁵⁵

The sound of the crew’s sea shanties echoing off the cliffs as the *Thetis* sailed through a fjord along the southern coast of Norway struck Wagner as “an omen of good fortune,” and became the inspiration behind the theme of the Sailors’ Chorus in Act I of his opera, *Der fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman)*.⁵⁶

Der fliegende Holländer premiered in Dresden in 1843 and is based on Heine’s version of the Flying Dutchman legend. The tale of the Flying Dutchman was doubly appealing to Wagner. On the one hand, its mythic dimensions resonated with his Romantic sensibilities; he was fascinated by myths and the manner in which they symbolized a movement of human thought and social hope that could be sustained through many generations. As Roger Scruton notes, Wagner believed that myths and legends awarded “object form to our inner compulsions.”⁵⁷ The tale of the Flying Dutchman was no exception. “The legend,” Wagner

⁵³ Newman, *The Wagner Operas*, 28-9.

⁵⁴ Grey, *Richard Wagner*, 1.

⁵⁵ Newman, *The Wagner Operas*, 9.

⁵⁶ Grey, *Richard Wagner*, 1-2.

⁵⁷ Roger Scruton, *Death-Devoted Heart: Sex and the Sacred in Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5.

wrote in a letter to his friend, François Villot, “has the advantage that it comprehends only the purely human portion of this age or nation... [and makes] ourselves feel in our hearts a sympathy with [humanity].”⁵⁸ The legend also drew Wagner’s attention because the dire fate of the Dutchman mirrored his own disastrous travels and experiences. The tale served as both moral and social symbol, “an epitome of half the evil of the world and its cure.”⁵⁹

The opera is based on the legend of *The Flying Dutchman* as seen through the eyes of Daland, a Norwegian sea-captain whose ship is boarded by the crew of the spectral vessel. Daland’s daughter, Senta, has grown up hearing tales of the cursed sea captain, courtesy of her childhood nurse, Mary. Over the course of these stories, Senta has fallen in love with the Dutchman and longs for the chance to free him from his doomed fate. The overture sets the nautical atmosphere with motifs depicting the rolling waves of a tempestuous sea, hinting at the darkness and despair that is to come. Wagner’s overture, as is the custom, introduces the main themes (*leitmotifs*) that are to return later in the opera.

The four distinct *leitmotifs* of the overture all display sea shanty influence. The Flying Dutchman theme, with its characteristic outline of open fifths followed by a motif of grace notes, is the first to signal the arrival of the Dutchman in Act I Scene I (see Example 6).⁶⁰ This theme indicates piratical presence throughout the work. Senta’s *leitmotif*—first introduced in mm. 65 of the *andante* section of the overture—directly foreshadows the lyrical refrain of Senta’s *Ballade*, to be sung in Act II Scene i. This refrain is associated with redemption, often

⁵⁸ Edward L. Burlingame, *Art Life and Theories of Richard Wagner, Selected from his Writings* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1875), 170.

⁵⁹ Newman, *The Wagner Operas*, 18.

⁶⁰ The Flying Dutchman *leitmotif*—perhaps the most common theme of the entire opera—is a sea shanty, for reasons that will be discussed later. However, to distinguish it from the other two, less common sea shanty themes of the overture, I will be referring to it as the (Flying) Dutchman *leitmotif*.

used to contrast the feeling of doomed fate found in the Dutchman's theme.⁶¹ In addition to signaling the topic of redemption, Senta's *leitmotif* changes form and character several times, alluding to the complexity of character often found in accounts of Romanticized Swashbucklers.

The final two *leitmotifs* in the overture are the most overtly sea-shanty-*esque*. Wagner transitions into the first sea shanty *leitmotif* in mm. 175 with a figure in the winds and brass which is reminiscent of the grace notes in the Flying Dutchman theme (see Example 7). The horns in mm. 179 are first to present the token three-note pattern of the first sea shanty. This *leitmotif* is later re-introduced in Act I Scene i during the Sailors' chorus: "*Hojohe! Hallojo!*" (see Example 8). This sea shanty theme, similar to Senta's *leitmotif*, is imbued with characteristics similar to those found in the Flying Dutchman theme. This *leitmotif* first appears in its fully-realized sea shanty form in mm. 25 of Act I with an initial call from a Norwegian sailor (see Example 9). In mm. 28-29, the three-note motif echoes off the cliffs to the right and left of their ship—an effect clearly inspired by Wagner's journey across the Baltic Sea.⁶² For a moment, it appears as if the music will return to its initial "stormy" atmospheric state, but the sea shanty figure appears once more, first at a slow pace, then gradually picking up momentum. This first sea shanty theme is rhythmic and has short vocal lines in the style of a short-drag shanty. The forty-measure "introduction" of this *leitmotif* establishes the shanty theme, thereby facilitating the recognizable quotation of the sea shanty during moments of lyricism. Wagner transforms the three-note descending pattern of this first shanty through rhythmic diminution to form the second sea shanty *leitmotif* (see Example 10), which appears in full force at the beginning of Act III in the Norwegian sailors' chorus: "*Steuermann, lass die Wacht!*" This pattern unites the two

⁶¹ Grey, *Richard Wagner*, 38.

⁶² Wagner denotes that a horn must be placed to the right and left of the stage, so as to most effectively create the "echoing" effect from his travels. See page 34.

leitmotifs of the opera, adding a sense of continuity to the work by suggesting that the later themes develop from the same dramatic kernels as the earlier ones.

The two sea shanty choruses possess the structure of a traditional sea shanty. Their themes are short, catchy, and easy to sing; the arias are largely repetitive and fast paced. These leitmotivic episodes are most likely Wagner's attempts to recreate the traditional sea shanties that he encountered in his travels.

The Flying Dutchman theme, on the other hand, is more difficult to classify. In the first two Acts of the opera, this theme is not presented as a sea shanty. Its function is primarily atmospheric: it is a general, thematic reminder to the audience that the work has a nautical setting. Around mm. 224 of Act III, however, as the Dutch sailors mournfully prepare their ship to leave port, the Flying Dutchman theme performs the function of a sea shanty. This is the most stylistically-transposed theme of the entire opera and can thus be classified a number of ways. However, in the finale of Act III, Wagner treats the *leitmotif* as a sea shanty, thereby permitting its consideration as a shanty theme.

Regardless of its function at any given moment, the Flying Dutchman theme returns throughout the opera as a reminder to the audience of the maritime setting, often accompanied by allusions to the nautical atmosphere as evoked by the rolling waves of rising and falling chromatic notes in the lower strings of mm. 6. This theme is frequently quoted, either fragmented or in its entirety. For example, the "*Capitän*" theme—a three-note motif repeated whenever Captain Daland's *Steuermann* or the Dutchman's sailors call to their captain—is an echo of the perfect-fifth interval from the Flying Dutchman *leitmotif* (see Example 11).

The Flying Dutchman theme is not the only recurring theme to remind the audience of the maritime setting. Wagner uses two distinct "wave" motifs in the strings to denote the

tempestuous motion of the seas. The first appears in the chromatic phrases introduced in mm. 6 of the overture by the cellos and the basses (see Example 12). The second “wave” motif enters as a violently rolling motif in mm. 26 (see Example 13). Throughout the opera, these wave motifs perform various functions. In mm. 13 of Act I, for example, the alternation between diminished-seventh chords and the first wave motif suggests a struggling duality—perhaps that of lightning and thunder (see Example 14).

Der fliegende Holländer is one of the most important works in the canon of sea-shanty-inspired Classical works because Wagner seamlessly merges nautically-inspired themes with a normative nineteenth-century symphonic style. He often mixes the musical topic of the sea shanty with melodies that are folk-like. The Steersman’s song, “*Mit Gewitter und Sturm*,” for example, which occurs in Act I Scene i, begins with a folk-like melody: its harmonies are comparatively straightforward and the intervallic leaps and outlines are all relatively simple (see Example 15).⁶³

Wagner combines a shanty melody reminiscent of the first sea shanty with the Steersman’s folk song (beginning in mm. 212 of Act I), perhaps as a reminder that the Steersman is at task. This might also be an attempt to embed the nautical atmosphere deeper in the audience’s subconscious even when no explicit labor is taking place. The crew of Daland’s ship eventually adopt the Steersman’s *Mit Gewitter und Sturm* melody as they raise the anchor in mm. 558. They use less *rubato*, converting the folk melody into even more of a shanty by

⁶³ The rhythm of the song, it must be noted, is not straightforward or simple. One might hypothesize that Wagner decided to notate the Steersman’s melody in this manner in an attempt to recreate a recitative-like, natural feeling for the melody—a means by which to create an illusion of authenticity and “realism.” See more on Wagner’s “realism” in Chapter VI.

imbuing it with a heightened sense of momentum (see Example 16). In this moment, Wagner evokes a capstan shanty through the use of long verses and slow, steady rhythms.

The *Spinnerlied* from Act II also demonstrates an entwinement of folk song and sea shanty. Although this spinning chorus is a folk song, it mimics the style of the sea shanty, suggesting that the boundary separating the two musical styles is not as distinct in Classical music as previously assumed. The *Spinnerlied* is introduced in Act II Scene i with a glimpse of Captain Daland's Norwegian hometown during a moment of domestic labor. Although the theme of the Maids' Spinning Chorus is not technically a sea shanty (which is, by even the most lenient definition, a song originating at sea), Wagner mimics the traditional shanty style. For all intents and purposes, this theme functions similarly to a sea shanty since it is rhythmically steady so as to facilitate unity of labor. Furthermore, although the song itself is not performed on the water, it is frequently evident that the Maids' attentions are fixed upon the sea. The refrain, for example, roughly translates to:

My lover is upon the sea,
And thinks of her, home piously;
Spin, my good wheel! Ah!
Would you blow him home, swiftly! (mm. 27-35)⁶⁴

These maids are lovers of sailors (presumably Daland's crew). They function as if their work were aiding in the return of their husbands, rendering the *Spinnerlied* an honorary sea shanty. In this spinning chorus, Wagner replaces the "*Hojohe! Hallojo!*" from the Sailors' Chorus with

⁶⁴ "Mein Schatz ist auf dem Meere draus,
er denkt nach Haus an's fromme Kind;
mein gutes Rädchen braus' und saus'!
Ach, gäb'st du Wind, er käm' geschwind!" (II.i.27-35)

“*Trala-ralalalalala*.” The rhythmic motif from the Flying Dutchman theme, which is modified in the Sailors’ Chorus, is also present in this spinning song (see Example 7).

Another example of sea-shanty and folk-melody interchangeability can be heard at the opening of Act III. This final act begins with a Chorus of the Norwegian Sailors from Captain Daland’s ship as they celebrate their homecoming with a rousing sea shanty. Although this theme—the second sea shanty from the overture—functions primarily as a shanty, folk song influences are evident throughout. For example, the overall harmonic structure of the theme is relatively straightforward. At the start of the brass-heavy *tutti* instrumental introduction, the tonic is clearly established and the melodic line continues as a simple, eight-bar phrase. Furthermore, in mm. 11, after a presentation of the initial sea shanty phrase and a short, two-bar transition, a distinctly folk-like melody is introduced. Ironically, when the chorus of the Norwegian crew begins the sea shanty, the text reveals that they are urging the Steersman to stop working:

Steersman, leave the watch!
 Steersman, to us!
 Ho! He! Yo! Ha!
 Raise the sails!
 Anchor fast!
 Steersman, here! (mm. 46–53)⁶⁵

⁶⁵ “Steuer mann, lass’ die Wacht!

Steuer mann, her zu uns!

Ho! He! Jo! Ha!

Hisst die Segel auf!

Anker fest!

Steuer mann, her!” (III.i.45–53).

At this point, the crew's sea shanty functions to perform the last tasks necessary for disembarking the ship. The Steersman's task is ostensibly concluded and the sailors, while singing the shanties for their own duties, urge him to lend his efforts to theirs, hoping to speed up the process. This sea shanty has a refrain and verse structure with vocal lines of a moderate length, similar to that of a halyard shanty. When the sailors begin to reflect upon their imminent independence from the seas in mm. 56 ("*We fear neither wind or wicked shores*"), the song switches to a folk style, perhaps as a signal to the audience that their reliance upon nautical conditions is coming to an end.⁶⁶ In mm. 64, the sailors mimic their song from Act I with octave jumps on the words "*Jo-ho-ho-he!*" They also employ a slight variation on the three-note calling motif from mm. 27 in Act I (see Example 17) while they rejoice in their looming autonomy ("*Cliff and storm... we'll laugh more!*").⁶⁷

Wagner often echoes fragments of the opera's three sea-shanty themes during his most lyrical moments, infusing the *cantabile* style with an element of rousing drama. One of the most lyrical moments of the opera, Senta's *Ballade* in Act II, is rife with references to both the Flying Dutchman theme and the Sailors' Chorus from Act I. In mm. 75, the *Ballad* directly quotes both the distinct Dutchman rhythmic motif and the recognizable series of open fifths, used in this instance to facilitate the transition between Senta's *leitmotif* and the following theme in mm. 97. When the melody of Senta's *leitmotif* reappears in the following acts, it is punctuated by the Flying Dutchman theme, indicating the close connection between the legend of the Dutchman and Senta's confused sense of reality over the course of the opera. This intermingling of themes also demonstrates the significance that redemption plays upon the Dutchman's psychological state. Along these lines, the presence of the Flying Dutchman theme during Senta's *leitmotif*

⁶⁶ "Fürchten weder Wind noch bösen Strand" (III.i.56-57).

⁶⁷ "Klipp'und Sturm' lachen wir aus!" (III.i.65-67)

serves a dual purpose: it demonstrates Senta's preoccupation with the spectral captain while signifying that her fate is closely bonded with that of the Dutchman.

The *Ballade* itself, which begins in mm. 311 of Act II Scene i, is an amalgamation of three different classifications of sea song: the sea shanty, the sea ballad, and a lyrical sea song reminiscent of folk tradition. Before Senta begins to sing, the orchestra mimics the beginning of the Flying Dutchman theme using the second wave motif as a reminder to the audience that the tale about to be recited is a nautical one. In mm. 321, after an elongated pause, Senta begins her *Ballade* with a wistful echo of the open fifths from the Flying Dutchman theme (see Example 18). The text sets the maritime scene by mimicking the Sailors' Chorus from Act I.⁶⁸ During Senta's initial open-fifths, Wagner momentarily silences the orchestra. The loss of orchestral accompaniment at this crucial moment creates an eerie effect, as it draws Senta's character firmly into the audience's frame. This characteristic of momentary "realism" makes Senta's obsession with the spectral, piratical figure all the more haunting. For a few measures, the audience is not simply experiencing fantastical events taking place in a fictional world, but sharing a moment that could occur in a reality beyond the stage.

Senta's stately sea ballad—characterized by its "epic" content, the nautical context, and the fact that it is not a work song—recounts the shiver-inducing tale of the Flying Dutchman.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ From the Sailors' Chorus in Act I, mm. 48-52: "Ho! He! He! Ja! Ho! He! He! Ja! Hallo-jo!"
From Senta's Ballade in Act II, mm. 321-325: "Jo-ho-hoe! Jo-ho-ho-hoe! Ho-ho-hoe! Jo-hoe!"

⁶⁹ "*Have you seen the ship upon the sea,
blood-red the sails, black the mast?
Upon the deck, the pale man,
the ship's restless master.*
"Traft ihr das Schiff im Meere an,
blutroth die Segel, schwarz der Mast?"

As Senta mimics the sea shanty style through her exclamation of “Hojohe!” (mm. 336), the strings evoke a turbulent sea through the chromatically ascending and descending wave motifs from the overture (see Example 19). Once the violent “ocean” subsides in mm. 349, Senta begins her lyrical sea song, thereby recalling the second *leitmotif* from the overture (see Example 20). At this moment, she reveals her desire to be the woman who breaks the Dutchman’s curse. As the *Ballade* continues, cycling through the three genres of sea song, the Maids intermittently join in, and the orchestra repeatedly echoes fragments of the Flying Dutchman theme. The *Ballade* ends in mm. 418 following an episode of *coloratura* that exemplifies Senta’s characteristic chromaticism (see Example 21). Senta’s melodic lines, in comparison to those of Mary and the Norwegian Maids, are more dissonant; her melodies are heavily chromatic with many tritones, whereas the Maids have simpler melodies with intervallic leaps of thirds and perfect fourths. Interestingly, the Dutchman, in his duet with Senta’s father in Act I, has a similar dissonant characteristic of dissonance, perhaps an indication of their similar sensibilities, or a portent of their destined love.

Through the inclusion of the sea shanty *leitmotifs* during lyrical moments like Senta’s *Ballade*, Wagner Romanticizes nautical musical forms. Within the plot of the opera, the “theme” of Romanticism is reflected primarily through Senta. She views the tragic life of the Dutchman as one rife with adventure, thereby overlooking the darker, harsher aspects of what this cursed nautical existence might entail. This blindness to reality parallels that of the Swashbuckler “genre” as a whole. As we saw in Chapter III, this tends towards Romanticism. Wagner’s opera,

Auf hohem Bord der bleiche Mann,
des Schiffes Herr, wacht ohne Rast.” (II.i.325-332)

true to the Swashbuckler canon, emphasizes characters who overlook the harshness and brutality of reality out of an insatiable desire for adventure.

Der fliegende Holländer is an apt representation of how nautical culture has been heavily Romanticized in art. Wagner uses sea shanties and ballads to imbue his works with a sense of excitement, drama, and romance, unconcerned with an authentic depiction of nautical life.⁷⁰

Wagner's opera is significant to the Classical shanty canon primarily because it demonstrates a demand for the fantastical. The work's success can serve as proof that Wagner's public was in need of adventure and excitement. Operas like *Der fliegende Holländer* enabled a heavily constricted and structured society to live a vicarious life of adventure—a collective desire for escapism that could be satiated in the safety of an opera house. *Der fliegende Holländer* is not only a tale of operatic and mythical fulfillment—it is a means towards “dream” fulfillment in our reality.

The Dutchman Cambiata

At the end of Senta's *leitmotif* in the overture comes the most interesting motivic figure of the entire work: a “simple” *cambiata* ornament found at the end of the overture and at the end of the final act (see Example 22). Just as Wagner's *leitmotifs* “foretell” the major themes of his work, the end of the overture augurs the finale of the work as a whole. The *cambiata* figure appears after a series of turbulent passages in the overture. A final echo of Senta's theme enters

⁷⁰ We will see more of this in Chapter VIII on Benjamin Britten's sea shanties.

with accompaniment through an arpeggiated harp motion, coming to a resolution after an excruciatingly beautiful inverted *cambiata* (mm. 393-394 of overture).

Wagner's choice to end both his overture and his opera with this final *cambiata* movement is a brilliant application of the ornament's accentuation of dissonance. A *cambiata* is, inherently, a prolonging of dissonance which thereby increases the significance of consonance. With this final *cambiata*, Wagner prolongs the audience's hopes of a resolution (both musical and thematic), teasing until the last possible moment. This horizontal tetrad is a condensed summary of the entire opera; it simultaneously portrays the Dutchman's agonizing anticipation and augurs his ultimate redemption.

Although the melodic ornaments that end the overture and the finale are essentially the same, their placements within the opera indicate their functional differences. The *cambiata* at the end of the overture has a theoretical function: it signifies the promise of redemption and is a subliminal suggestion to the audience of the opera's ultimate resolution. The *cambiata* at the end of the opera is a symbol. The central dissonant notes of the ornamental figure represent the struggle endured by both the Dutchman and Senta; the ultimate resolution is the last harmonious touch to the romance of the star-crossed lovers. This resolution serves as a final assurance to the audience of the lovers' transcendent union.

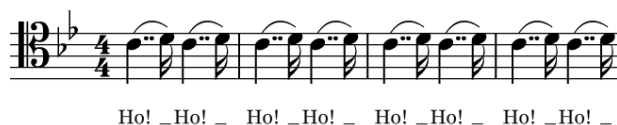
Musical Examples for Der fliegende Holländer

EXAMPLE 6: THE FLYING DUTCHMAN THEME AS IT APPEARS IN THE BRASS AND WINDS OF THE OVERTURE.



EXAMPLE 7: A COMPARISON OF “GRACE-NOTE” MOTIFS FROM THE SAILORS’ CHORUS OF ACT I (TOP), THE *SPINNERLIED* OF ACT II (MIDDLE), AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN *LEITMOTIF* FROM THE OVERTURE (BOTTOM).

Sailor's Chorus (I.i.)



Spinning Chorus (II.i.)



Flying Dutchman Theme (Overture)



EXAMPLE 8: THREE-NOTE HORN PATTERN. THIS LATER BECOMES THE KERNEL OF THE FIRST SEA SHANTY *LEITMOTIF*.



EXAMPLE 9: FIRST THREE MEASURES OF THE FIRST SEA SHANTY *LEITMOTIF* (ACT I SCENE I).

Ho- jo - he! Ha-llo-jo!

EXAMPLE 10: FIRST FOUR MEASURES OF THE SECOND SEA SHANTY *LEITMOTIF* (ACT III SCENE I).

Ste-uer-mann, lass' — die Wacht! Ste-uer-mann, her — zu uns!

EXAMPLE 11: THREE-NOTE “CAPITÄN” MOTIF AS IT FIRST APPEARS IN ACT I SCENE I.

Ca-pi- tan!

EXAMPLE 12: FIRST WAVE MOTIF AS IT FIRST APPEARS IN THE CELLI OF THE OVERTURE.

EXAMPLE 13: SECOND WAVE MOTIF AS IT FIRST APPEARS IN THE VIOLINS OF THE OVERTURE.

EXAMPLE 14: PIANO REDUCTION OF MEASURES 13-16 (ACT I SCENE I). NOTE THE EVOCATION OF A STRUGGLING DUALITY PRODUCED BY THE DIMINISHED-SEVENTH CHORDS (MM. 13) AND THE FIRST WAVE MOTIF (MM. 15).



EXAMPLE 15: ABOVE, THE BEGINNING OF THE STEUERMANN'S "*MIT GEWITTER UND STURM*" (ACT I SCENE I). BELOW, THE THEME OF "*MIT GEWITTER UND STURM*" SUNG AS A SEA SHANTY BY THE CREW OF DALAND'S SHIP (ACT I SCENE III).



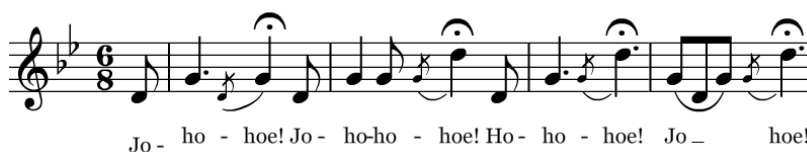
EXAMPLE 16: SEA-SHANTY EVOCATIONS IN "*MIT GEWITTER UND STURM*" (ACT I SCENE I).



EXAMPLE 17: RHYTHMIC ADAPTATION OF THE “*CAPITÄN*” THEME (SOLID) AND THE THREE-NOTE FROM ACT III SCENE I (DASHED).



EXAMPLE 18: START OF SENTA'S *BALLADE* IN ACT II



EXAMPLE 19: ECHOES OF THE SEA SHANTY STYLE IN SENTA'S *BALLADE* (ACT II SCENE I).



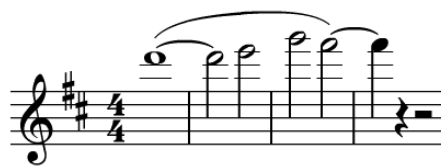
EXAMPLE 20: A CHROMATIC PASSAGE AT THE END OF SENTA'S *BALLADE* (ACT II SCENE I).



EXAMPLE 21: SENTA'S *LEITMOTIF*. THIS APPEARS IN THE SEA-BALLADE SECTION OF HER SONG IN ACT II.



EXAMPLE 22: THE *CAMBIATA* ORNAMENT FOUND IN THE VIOLINS AT THE END OF BOTH THE OVERTURE AND ACT III.



Two Der fliegende Holländer Piano Transcriptions by Franz Liszt

Liszt (1811-1886) and Wagner were close acquaintances even before the younger composer married Liszt's daughter, Cosima (after a lengthy affair during her marriage to Hans von Bülow, an ardent devotee of both Liszt and Wagner). Both composers, at various times, considered the other to be a musical mentor. Liszt, on his part, championed many of Wagner's works: he produced a number of Wagner's operas and instrumental works, including *Tannhäuser* (1845) and *Lohengrin* (1850). Liszt admired Wagner's "utter contempt of the world and of all else except his art."⁷¹ This latter focus of Liszt's admiration, regrettably, meant that Wagner was "an extremely graceless recipient" of Liszt's generosity.⁷² According to many, Wagner was a "self-centered egotist" whose attachment to Liszt was mainly due to the fact that the older composer was "useful to him, both artistically and financially."⁷³ Regardless of whether this was the case or not, it is inarguable that Wagner looked to Liszt's compositions for inspiration. His examination of Liszt's symphonic poems, for example, led him to write: "I regard you [Liszt] as the creator of my present position. When I compose and orchestrate I always think only of you."⁷⁴ Since inspiration flowed both directions, musicologists and critics have jested that "the problem of who influenced whom is like the proverbial question of the hen and the egg."⁷⁵

There are many stylistic similarities between the works of the two composers. For example, both Wagner and Liszt experimented with the technique of thematic transformation.

⁷¹ Annemarie Halloran, *Liszt's Heroes: An Investigation into the Artistic Interdependence of Franz Liszt and his Contemporaries* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 2005), 8.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷³ Humphrey Searle, *The Music of Liszt* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2012), 64.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

A number of Liszt's works are quasi-variational, wherein he manipulates and transforms a single theme. Wagner, as we saw in *Der fliegende Holländer*, used *leitmotifs*, which he varied according to their changing functions within a single work. Another similarity between the two composers is their experimentation with chromatic harmonies. However, while Liszt's use of chromaticism tended to serve his pursuit of virtuosity, Wagner's chromaticism often performed a modulatory harmonic function and served to destabilize tonal stability.

Given the degree of compositional trading that occurred between Wagner and Liszt (as well as the latter's tendency to write pianistic transcriptions of major orchestral and operatic works), it is unsurprising that Liszt chose to transcribe two of the major themes—*Spinnerlied* (1860) and Senta's *Ballad* (1872)—from *Der fliegende Holländer* for the piano. The bird-like spinning song from Act II likely appealed to Liszt's more humorous pianistic tendencies; around the same time, he composed similarly fantastical pieces like the etude, *Gnomenszenen* (1862), and a collection of Hungarian Rhapsodies (1857-60), the second of which is often remembered as "The Bugs Bunny Piece," thanks to a *Looney Tunes* reinterpretation.⁷⁶

When considering the relationship between a piano arrangement of an operatic work, it is important to first understand the genre of transcription (see FIGURE 1). A piano transcription tends to fall into two categories: it either offers a virtuosic "re-enactment" of major themes or it is designed for use in parlors and salons so that the general public (or, at least, those who are relatively proficient at the keyboard) can enjoy operatic works at home. Liszt's piano transcriptions were no different than conventional piano transcriptions in that they often fulfilled one of these two main functions. Kenneth Hamilton focuses on Liszt's

⁷⁶ This is in reference to the 1946 Warner Bros. Pictures short, *Rhapsody Rabbit*, which features Bugs Bunny playing the rhapsody while performing an assortment of visual "gags."

treatment of excerpts from Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, arguing that the seven transcriptions inspired by these two operas all fell "into two distinct classes: works designed for the parlor pianist versus those only playable by top-class virtuosi."⁷⁷

Liszt's virtuosic transcriptions were often designed to showcase his compositional prowess. According to Philip Friedheim, Liszt transcribed Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830), "solely as a challenge to his abilities as an arranger and performer, precisely because the work was basically unsuited to the piano. His performance was therefore intended for an audience which already knew the orchestral version, and could the more readily appreciate his own achievement."⁷⁸ Many of Liszt's transcriptions of Wagner's works could also be interpreted as contributions to this type of transcription. "Liszt performed the prelude to the third act of *Lohengrin* on the piano," Friedheim posits, "[either] to champion Wagner's cause, or in order to prove that it was possible for him to do it."⁷⁹ Friedheim's musings demonstrate the uncertainty that often accompanies hermeneutic efforts to determine causes of motivation behind the composition of a piece.

Of course, ambiguous motives behind the composition of transcriptions are not unique to Liszt. Federico Busoni (1866-1924), the "master of transcription," sometimes stated that he was revising Baroque or Classical masterpieces in order to "reformat" them for modern instruments (well-known among his transcriptions is a collection of Mozart's piano concertos). Whether revision was his true motive is often contested. Many critics express skepticism, commenting that such transcriptions seem primarily driven by Busoni's need to "improve" the

⁷⁷ Kenneth Hamilton, "Wagner and Liszt: Elective Affinities," in *Richard Wagner and His World*, ed. Thomas S. Grey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 36.

⁷⁸ Philip Friedheim, "The Piano Transcriptions of Franz Liszt," *Studies in Romanticism*, 1/2 (1962), 85.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

works of others. In a letter to Arnold Schoenberg in 1909, for example, Busoni somewhat arrogantly wrote: “I have penetrated so deeply and closely to your thoughts that I myself was irresistibly urged to translate your intentions into *sound*.”⁸⁰ Busoni believed that his alterations to Schoenberg’s compositions “not only improved the piano writings and the form, but also came closer to realizing Schoenberg’s intentions than Schoenberg himself.”⁸¹

While Liszt’s virtuosic transcriptions served to demonstrate his compositional skill and pianistic virtuosity, the “parlor” transcriptions functioned to present readily available versions of orchestral compositions which were performed infrequently.⁸² Penrose presents yet another possible classification for Liszt’s transcriptions: “Many transcriptions were written because performance standards were not high during the first half of the nineteenth century; Liszt transcribed the Beethoven symphonies simply because he could play them better than many orchestras.”⁸³

The function of transcription can be categorized according to three subclasses outlined by Busoni (see Figure 2). The first of these subclasses (*Transkription* or *Übertragung*) refers to the “transferring” (essentially, arranging) of a piece from one instrument or body of instruments to another. *Bearbeitung*, the second subclass, refers to pieces which the transcriber “reworks.” In these transcriptions, there are even distributions of “original” ideas (of the

⁸⁰ Ferruccio Busoni, *Selected Letters*, trans. and ed. Antony Beaumont (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 386.

⁸¹Erinn E. Knyt, “‘How I Compose’: Ferruccio Busoni’s Views about Invention, Quotation, and the Compositional Process,” *The Journal of Musicology*, 27/2 (2010), 228.

⁸² Friedheim, “The Piano Transcriptions of Franz Liszt,” 83; “Admittedly, an orchestral performance of a symphony by Berlioz or a music drama by Wagner was not as frequent as that of a piano composition” (Ibid., 84).

⁸³ James F. Penrose, “The Piano Transcription of Franz Liszt,” *The American Scholar*, 64/2 (1995), 274.

transcriber) to “borrowed” (drawing from another work). The third subclass of transcription is referred to as *Nachdichtung*, used to label compositions that draw quotations from other works, but which are otherwise considered to be original. Paradoxically, these three subclasses not only clarify the different types of transcription, but also “obscure... boundaries between composition and arrangement.”⁸⁴ They demonstrate three crucial forms of transcription, clarifying the degrees of separation between “composition” and “arrangement,” while simultaneously presenting more problematic classifications. We now have more terms about whose varying degrees of “originality” can be argued.

Transcriptions, in general, are a heavily contested compositional genre. In the nineteenth century, when Liszt wrote and performed his piano transcriptions, they were more readily accepted into the repertoire, but in the twentieth century (and, to some extent, even now), “what was accepted compositional practice... became aesthetically questionable” due to the increased emphasis on the notion of “compositional originality.”⁸⁵ In the preface to his Chopin *Etudes* (1894–1914), Leopold Godowsky wrote, somewhat ironically:

Being adverse to any alterations in the original texts of any master works when played in their original form, the author would strongly condemn any artist for tampering ever so little with such works as those of Chopin.⁸⁶

These views were not only held by composers and editors; contemporaneous reviews from the time reveal that critics had a similar attitude. In an anonymous review of Busoni’s transcription of Mozart’s Piano Concerto K.271, the author champions a popular argument against transcription:

⁸⁴ Knyt, “Ferruccio Busoni’s Views,” 224.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁸⁶ Godowsky, “*Personal Remarks*,” *Studies after Frederic Chopin* (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1903–1914), IV.

Where shall we draw the historical line? How shall we decide what music needs the hand of the retoucher? What music can suffer such liberties? And how far may the transcriber go in his arbitrariness... Personally, I conceive such treatment applied to Mozart as an act of violence done to the spirit and character of the music.⁸⁷

As a result of this shift against “retouching,” many critical accounts available today are colored by traditional hierarchies that revere “original” composition over transcriptions and arrangements.

Liszt’s piano transcriptions tend to fall into the categories of *Bearbeitung* and *Nachdichtung*. In some examples of *Nachdichtung*, such as Liszt’s *Fantasy on Themes from Rienzi* (1859) or the transcription of “Am stillen Herd” from *Die Meistersinger* (1871), the final product contains more of Liszt’s original composition than Wagner’s, thus enabling it to be considered as more of an original work than a “typical” transcription. The *Rienzi* fantasy, for example, is reimagined in sonata form, and the “Am stillen Herd” transcription (as Hamilton explains in his essay) is decorated by “floridly chromatic” improvisations upon operatic themes, thereby making use of “a sequential development of motives... [which extends] beyond that found in opera.”⁸⁸ Another extreme example of Liszt’s compositional originality is his transcription of the Grail March from *Parsifal* (1882) which, as Hamilton aptly describes, “sounds like a twisted parody of Parsifal rather than a transcription from it, as if Liszt is trying to remember the music but can’t quite figure out how it goes.”⁸⁹

Liszt did not always stray significantly from the original themes upon which he based his piano transcriptions. One example of this is his transcription of Isolde’s *Liebestod* (1868)

⁸⁷ Knyt, “Ferruccio Busoni’s Views,” 249.

⁸⁸ Kenneth Hamilton, “Wagner and Liszt: Elective Affinities,” in *Richard Wagner and His World*, ed. Thomas S. Grey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 41.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (1857-1859), which lacks any extra-Wagnerian additions after Liszt's original introduction. This was so much the case that, for a celebratory edition for the bicentenary of Wagner's birth, the score of *Tristan und Isolde* was used as a source to correct Liszt's transcription of the *Liebestod*.⁹⁰

Liszt's transcriptions of *Der fliegende Holländer* are similar to that of Isolde's *Liebestod* in that the melodies are structurally reminiscent of their original appearances in Wagner's opera. For example, in mm. 34 of Liszt's transcription of the *Spinnerlied*, he presents Wagner's theme in its entirety, complete with mischievous grace notes (i.e. the inner lines of mm. 39 and 41, echoing those of the Flying Dutchman Theme) and the "spinning" motif as accompaniment (see Example 23). The comically dreamy pause that is present in Wagner's original *Spinnerlied* can also be found in mm. 58 of Liszt's transcription; it is a brief respite from the spinning as the Maids wish that their labor could blow their lovers home. Liszt uses this musical moment from the opera to striking effect in the introduction to the transcription.

In many ways, Liszt also remains faithful to Wagner's original representation of Senta's *Ballade*. He begins the transcription with an allusion to the *Spinnerlied* theme, perhaps hinting that Senta's *Ballade* is preceded by the spinning song in Wagner's opera. Just as Wagner includes the two wave motifs and the "*Capitän*" theme throughout *Der fliegende Holländer*, Liszt often includes them in his accompanimental parts. At times, Liszt also maintains the folk-like simplicity that is so key to the spirit of the *Ballade*. In mm. 48, for example, he includes an accompaniment to Senta's folk-like theme that reflects the simplicity of Wagner's original scoring.

⁹⁰ Dominik Rahmer, "Wagner, Liszt, and Isolde 'Slurred'—How Well Do Composers Proofread Their Own Works?" www.henle.de, (March 18, 2013).

Interestingly, Liszt alludes to the theme of Senta's *Ballade* during his transcription of *Spinnerlied*, indicating his affinity for the *leitmotif* that would, in twelve years, become the subject of his second *Dutchman* transcription. In his *Spinnerlied* transcription, Liszt includes the open-fifth outline from the Flying Dutchman theme, which Wagner himself quotes at the beginning of Senta's *Ballade* in the original operatic work (see Example 24). One could interpret this inclusion a number of ways. In consideration with the accompanying performance marking, *träumend* (dreaming), we might consider this quotation to be an aural recreation of the Maids' memories of either Senta or the tale of the Flying Dutchman as they dream of their lovers at sea. This inclusion could also be interpreted as a Lisztian joke. Liszt is setting his audience up, pretending as if he is about to begin another lyrical section (presumably some variation of Senta's *Ballade*), until... he returns to the spinning motif (mm. 127).

Perhaps in a similar spirit as Busoni "realizing" composers' intentions for them, Liszt's transcriptions often suggest alternative narratives to the works upon which they are based. In his essay, *The Piano Transcriptions of Franz Liszt*, James Penrose writes:

Liszt's transcriptions show us the musical thinking of a composer moved and inspired by the artistry of other composers, while understanding that the musical substance of the underlying works is not static but capable of constant reworking and evolution. The transcriptions are more than monuments to other men's greatness. They are eloquent and moving testimonials to a different kind of musical beauty. In the hands of Liszt's more generous and capable disciples, we better sense that which lies beneath the surface of the originals.⁹¹

Penrose paints Liszt's motivations in a manner less browbeating than Busoni's, although this could be the interpretation of a sympathetic enthusiast. Despite the many ways in which he is faithful to Wagner's original scoring, Liszt's compositional presence is continuously evident in

⁹¹ Penrose, "The Piano Transcription of Franz Liszt," 276.

his *Dutchman* transcriptions through the moments of indubitable Lisztian humor. The *Spinnerlied* transcription, for example, is considerably more tongue-in-cheek than its original presentation in the opera. It starts with a comically hesitant commencement of spinning; the *scherzando* spinning motif accelerates and then rapidly loses momentum before coming to a tentative *fermata* after which the music returns to its initial state, as heard at the beginning. The entire time, Liszt avoids setting a specific rhythmic meter and tempo—a continued trait of his characteristically “devilish” humor. The piece begins with a half-bar anacrusis; the first “phrase” reaches a *fermata* in the third measure (see Example 25). In this way, hesitancy is quite literally built in the framework of the piece. This halting feeling continues until mm. 9, when a hovering, trill-like motif enters, ascending and descending in pitch as a tonal recreation of the rhythmical inconsistencies of the previous measures (see Example 26). Liszt continues to play with Wagner’s theme throughout the transcription. In mm. 22, for example, it seems as if he is finally stating the main *Spinnerlied* theme; he even includes the accompanying line that Wagner gives to the Maids in his opera. However, this presentation of the theme is revealed as yet another false start when Liszt cuts the line short in mm. 32 without the last resolving note of the melody. Instead of the resolution for which our ears yearn, he presents us with a cheeky, descending *arpeggio* figure (see Example 27). As the transcription progresses, Liszt’s additions to Wagner’s theme become more and more virtuosic in their humor. In mm. 63-64 (and 67-68), we get another glimpse of Liszt’s characteristically devilish humor in the form of light, playful upward leaps that then plummet downwards in a swift, virtuosic run (see Example 28). All these examples of Lisztian humor are extra-additions to Wagner’s original music; their inclusions allow us to regard these pieces as significant in their own right, and not simply as pianistic reductions or “copies” of Wagner’s music.

Wagner solidified nautical Romanticism within the Classical genre and established the bond between sea shanties and folk music. Liszt's piano transcriptions took this one step further and instituted sea shanties within the genre of "popular" salon music. With Wagner's contribution, one no longer needed to be in the vicinity of the sea to experience sea shanties, and with Liszt's, one no longer needed to attend a formal performance in order to hear "Classical" maritime music. Liszt's role in the subtle development of the nautical musical form was, essentially, to expand the reach and accessibility of the sea shanty, albeit within the rigid framework of the Classical genre.

Musical Examples for Liszt's Piano Transcriptions

FIGURE 1: "FUNCTIONS" OF A TRANSCRIPTION.

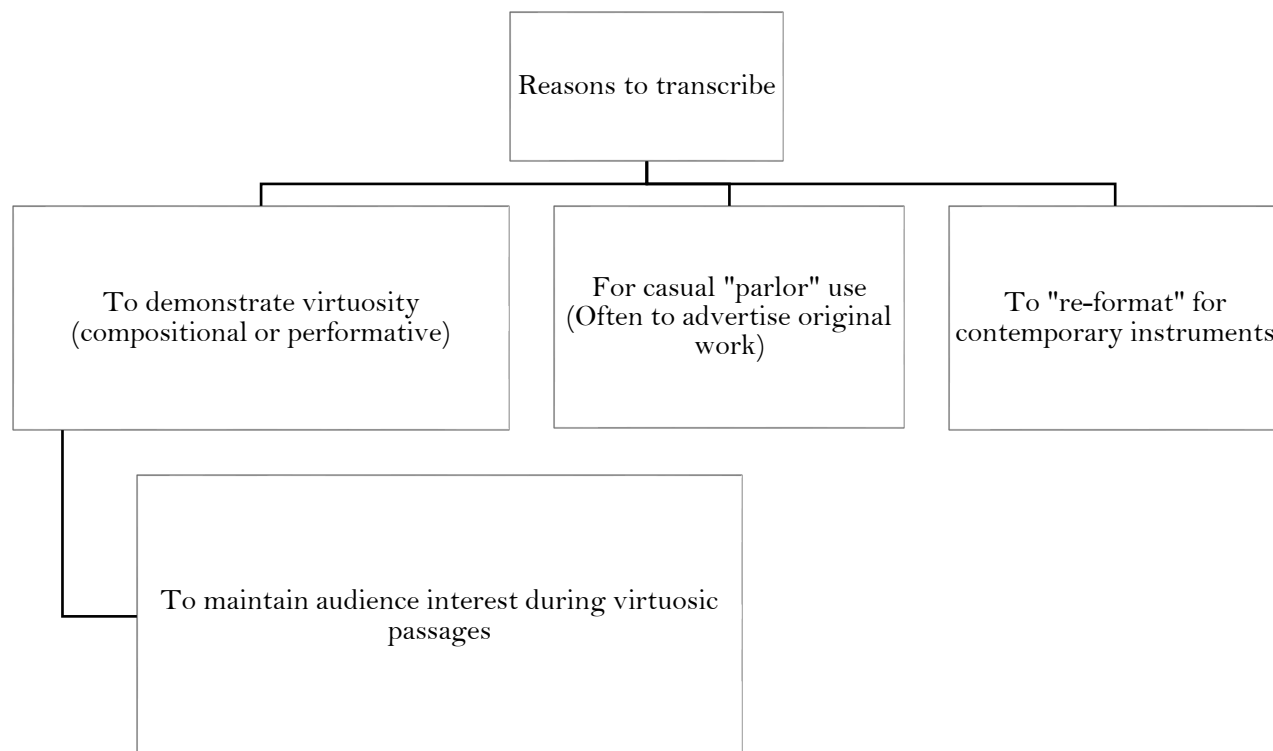
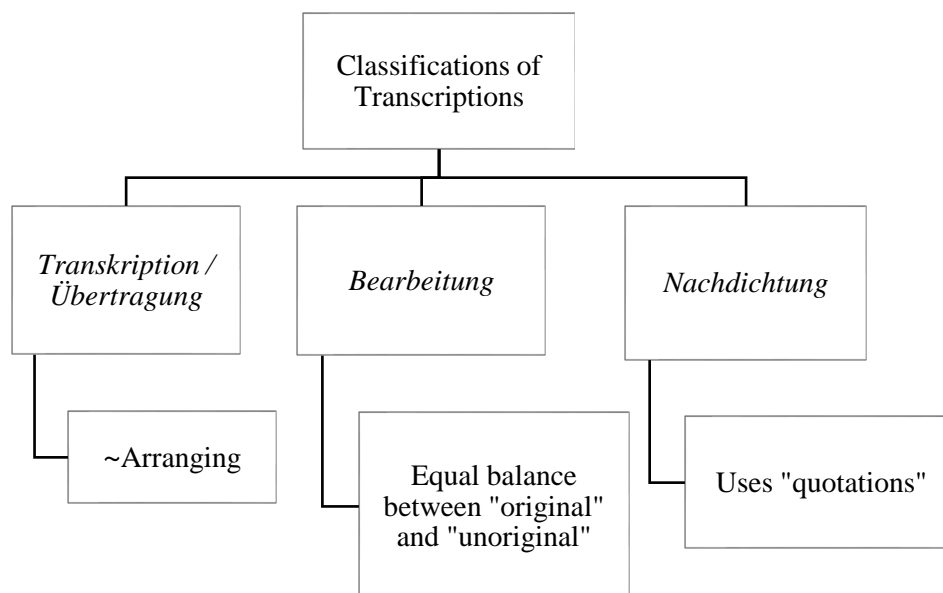


FIGURE 2: CLASSIFICATIONS OF A TRANSCRIPTION.



EXAMPLE 23: MM. 39 OF LISZT'S *SPINNERLIED* TRANSCRIPTION. LISZT RECREATES THE "SPINNING" MOTIF IN THE LEFT HAND, INCLUDING MISCHIEVOUS GRACE NOTES (CIRCLED) WHICH INVERTEDLY ECHO THE FLYING DUTCHMAN *LEITMOTIF*.



EXAMPLE 24: THE OPEN-FIFTH OUTLINE OF THE FLYING DUTCHMAN *LEITMOTIF* FROM MM. 118-121 OF LISZT'S *SPINNERLIED* TRANSCRIPTION.



EXAMPLE 25: FIRST MEASURES OF LISZT'S *SPINNERLIED* TRANSCRIPTION.



EXAMPLE 26: MM. 8-9 OF LISZT'S *SPINNERLIED* TRANSCRIPTION. NOTE THE TRILL-LIKE MOTIF IN MM. 9.



EXAMPLE 27: MM. 30-31 OF LISZT'S *SPINNERLIED* TRANSCRIPTION.EXAMPLE 28: MM. 62-64 OF LISZT'S *SPINNERLIED* TRANSCRIPTION. NOTE THE LEAPS UPWARDS IN THE LEFT HAND (MM. 63), AND THE PLUMMETING, VIRTUOSIC RUN (MM. 64).

V. Bedeviled and Bewitched: Tristan und Isolde, by Richard Wagner

Although sea shanties are not as prevalent in Wagner's other operatic works, they do appear as a secondary *leitmotif* in *Tristan und Isolde*. This opera is similar to *Der fliegende Holländer* in that it, too, is focused around the tale of star-crossed lovers. The two operas share additional musical similarities. For example, the heartbreaking *cambiata* at the end of *Der fliegende Holländer* is echoed in the primary *leitmotifs* of *Tristan und Isolde*, which are imbued with *appoggiature* and dissonant suspensions that symbolize, as was the case with the *Dutchman cambiata*, a yearning for that which is always slightly out of reach.

Wagner's primary source for his opera was Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan und Isolde*, which was written at the beginning of the thirteenth century.⁹² In particular, the character of Tristan would have resonated with Wagner if only due to the fact that Gottfried's *Tristan* possesses characteristics of The Wagnerian Hero. "Like Siegfried," Roger Scruton writes, "[Tristan] is an orphan, with a father slain before his birth and a mother who died, brokenhearted, in childbed.... [he is] consumed by a love that has no reproductive goal and whose meaning lies entirely in the obsessive bond between lovers."⁹³

From his correspondence with Liszt, it is clear that Wagner initially regarded the idea of an opera based on the tale of *Tristan und Isolde* as a means of relieving his persistent pecuniary problems. "I may assume," he writes in a letter to the older composer, "that a

⁹² Wagner was most likely aware of several other versions of the legend: namely, Bérout's poetic fragment from the twelfth century, the Middle English *Sir Tristrem* from the late thirteenth century, and the sixteenth-century tragedy of *Tristrant and Isalden* by Hans Sachs.

⁹³ Scruton, *Death-Devoted Heart*, 15-6.

thoroughly practicable work, such as ‘Tristan’ is to be, will quickly bring me good income, and keep me afloat.”⁹⁴ He initially approached the work as such and, in 1857, presented his “poem” of *Tristan und Isolde* to Mathilde Wesendonck, one of his patrons-turned-paramours. This gift catalyzed an angst-ridden, Tristanian confession, Wagner admits in a letter to his sister, Clara:

I penned the poem of my ‘Tristan’ just a year ago, and gave it to her, then for the first time did she lose her self-control, and confessed to me that she must die... Yet we recognized forthwith that any union between us could not be so much as thought of [because the two were both already married at the time], and were accordingly resigned; renouncing every selfish wish, we suffered, endured, but—loved each other!⁹⁵

This newly-discovered and “deliciously tormented” relationship provided sufficient inspiration for the musical composition of his opera.⁹⁶ He began his compositional draft at the beginning of October, two weeks after presenting the libretto to Wesendonck, and it was completed by the end of the year.⁹⁷

Wagner was also drawn to the tragic story of *Tristan und Isolde* by a newfound philosophical interest. He had recently encountered Schopenhauer’s *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, which addresses the connection between the deceptive world of appearances (the “noumenal” world) and the world of reality (the “phenomenal”).⁹⁸ The latter’s very nature, Schopenhauer writes, pivots around an irrational, purposeless Will that draws humanity into a

⁹⁴ Edward Ziegler, *Richard Wagner: Tristan and Isolde* (Cambridge: F. A. Stokes Company, 1909), 154.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁹⁷ The initial compositional sketches of the opera, as presented to Wesendonck, were written in pencil. They were later traced in ink “to preserve them, by the Wesendonck,” perhaps as an indication of Mathilde Wesendonck’s painstaking love for the composer, (*Ibid.*, 160).

⁹⁸ Eric Chafe, *The Tragic and the Ecstatic: The Musical Revolution of Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 32–48.

world of actions and motivations that we merely *think* we can control. To follow the Will is to obey our human natures, which inevitably bring us frustration and unhappiness due to the fact that there is no specific intent or design in the universe. Furthermore, this means that any act to ensure our happiness will only draw us further into the influence of the Will's unstable mutability. There is no escape from this fate, and the best position to take (according to Schopenhauer) is to draw back the veil of illusion that obscures humanity from the reality of the Will and accept the futility and suffering of life.

Schopenhauer's philosophy resonated greatly with Wagner, who had been predisposed to such thinking long before he discovered *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. Indeed, Schopenhauer's work merely clarified his existing outlook and provided it with some validity. That Schopenhauer, like many great philosophers, regarded music as one true way of connecting humans with reality and conveying the essence of life was surely not detrimental to Wagner's affinity towards the philosopher. For Wagner, the tragic love story of *Tristan und Isolde* was an epitomic representation of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Wagner's treatment of the composition was representative of the universal significance that he found in the tale. In his scoring of the legend, Wagner captures the philosophical beliefs of Schopenhauer by demonstrating the inevitability of pain caused by longing. We will be examining his specific methods of portraying longing and pain later in this chapter.

Although the plot of *Tristan und Isolde* is not as centered upon the maritime as *Der fliegende Holländer*, the first act of the opera takes place on the seas. During this act, Wagner includes details—musical, textual, and visual—that are designed to remind the audience of the work's nautical setting. The first act begins with a lone sailor singing a haunting, unaccompanied sea shanty. In Act I Scene ii, Wagner indicates that the curtain must rise to

display the full majesty of Tristan's ship as the unaccompanied sea shanty returns, further establishing the nautical setting:

One looks along the starboard side of a ship, the sea and horizon beyond. Around the mainmast, sailors bustle, busying themselves with ropes... Up on the mast, from a great height, you hear again the voice of the young sailor.

This sea shanty becomes the source for many choruses and accompanimental parts of the first act—a continuous reminder that the story is still unfolding upon an oceanic vessel. This first sea shanty functions in a similar way to that of the Flying Dutchman *leitmotif* in that it, too, establishes the nautical setting. Wagner draws other parallels between the Dutchman *leitmotif* and *Tristan's* primary sea shanty theme. For example, when the latter appears in the orchestra, it is accompanied by a relatively simple motif adorned with grace notes (see Example 29) calling to mind the series of grace notes found in the Flying Dutchman theme.

In its initial presentation, this first sea shanty motif initially has the most “authentic” setting of any of Wagner's sea shanties because it is unaccompanied when heard in Act I Scenes i and ii. The sailor's song contains a number of tritone leaps, three changes of time signature, and several occasions where it tonicizes contrasting keys (see Example 30). One cannot be sure whether the sailor will settle into a major or minor key until mm. 21, where Wagner finally establishes the major key in which he cadences, although this, too, proves to be a different key from that in which the orchestra will finally enter. The “authentic” unaccompanied setting of this sea shanty allows Wagner to play with the sailor's melodic line. As a result, he provides the sailor with a melody atypical for a typical sea shanty (it includes too many unadvised vocal leaps and is far too ambiguous in terms of its harmonic progression) without depriving the song of a “sea shanty” classification; Wagner essentially stylizes the idea of the sea shanty.

Furthermore, by employing as natural a setting for the shanty as an operatic work can afford, Wagner strengthens the “legitimacy” of the opera’s nautical setting.

Wagner establishes parallels between folk song and sea shanty by re-introducing this characteristic of “unaccompaniment” from Act I in the final act of *Tristan und Isolde*. Just as the lone sailor’s unaccompanied sea shanty eases the transition between the Overture and the first act, an English Horn solo (signifying the piping of a lone shepherd (see Example 31) bridges the gap between the Introduction of Act III and Act III Scene i. As was the case with the unaccompanied sea shanty, Wagner employs the “shepherd’s” tune to set the pastoral scene, further demonstrating that a folk song can function in a similar manner to sea shanties.

Although there are fewer occurrences of the synthesis of folk song and sea shanty in *Tristan und Isolde* than in *Der fliegende Holländer*, we hear one notable example. In mm. 204, at the end of Scene ii, Kurwenal mockingly sings a folk song to Brangäne as she retreats to Isolde, following the delivery of her mistress’ unwelcome message.⁹⁹ After Kurwenal sings through this folk song once, the sailors take up the last verse of the song as a shanty:

His head hangs in Ireland,
As England pays tribute:
Ho! Our Hero Tristan,
Once more is tribute paid.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ See Example 33; This is at a point in the opera when animosity still exists between Isolde and Tristan: pre-potion.

¹⁰⁰ “Sein Haupt doch hängt im Irenland,
als Zins gezahlt von Engeland:
hei! unser Held Tristan,
wieder Zins zahlen” (I.ii.242-249).

This tune, which is not a sea shanty, begins to function as one, as was the case with the Flying Dutchman theme and the Steersman's "*Mitt Gewitter und Sturm*." Similarly to the opening sea shanty, this melody is also unaccompanied. There is little harmonic support to speak of; the accompaniment performs more of an atmospheric than a structural role. First, there are *tremoli* in the violas, then swift, sporadic scalar motions in the rest of the strings as the scene comes to a close. Similar to the initial sailor's song, this folk-song-turned-sea-shanty is also relatively unaccompanied, likewise creating the illusion that it is an "authentic" sea song portrayal.

One distinct difference between *Tristan* and our preceding operas is the clearly peripheral role of the Swashbuckler; *Tristan's* nautical characters (piratical or not) do not receive a prominent role. Instead, maritime folk are presented as a 'mass'—a unified group—without much emphasis on individuality. The reason for this is, quite likely, that Wagner's intent was not to underscore the nautical aspects of his tale. However, that Wagner was able to include sea shanties in this capacity serves as a testament to the ease with which such maritime elements can be integrated within the Classical genre. Furthermore, it demonstrates the efficacy of the unifying effect of the sea shanty, as demonstrated by Wagner's success in portraying Tristan's crew virtually as a single entity.

Throughout Act I, there are several examples of sea shanties that function primarily to signify the setting at sea. Near the end of Scene iii, for example, the sound of a sea shanty cuts into Isolde and Brangäne's plotting of Tristan's death (see Example 32).¹⁰¹ It appears briefly to establish the sea shanty theme and to demonstrate the significance of the shanty as prescribed by Isolde, who takes the sailor's song as a sign of the ship's imminent and unwelcome arrival at

¹⁰¹ *She hears with increasing horror, the call of the sailors.*

"[sie] vernimmt mit wachsendem Schrecken den Ruf des Schiffsvolkes [außen]" (I.iii.565).

port (“How swift our voyage! Woe is me! Near the land!”).¹⁰² After this has been established, the theme returns repeatedly to indicate that the scene is still taking place aboard a nautical vessel. In Scene iv, for example, this theme is present at the outset in the winds, indicating a continuation of the sailors’ preparations for arrival.

The sailor’s unaccompanied song at the beginning of Act I Scene i and ii and the sea shanty that interjects into Isolde and Brangäne’s plotting in Act I Scene iii raise several questions related to authenticity. In many ways, Wagner tries to evoke the atmosphere of the sea shanty in the first act of *Tristan und Isolde*. Orchestral silence is one of the most notable techniques for imbuing an operatic work with a sense of “legitimacy.” We saw this technique at the outset of Senta’s *Ballade* in *Der fliegende Holländer*; the use of silence in the sailor’s unaccompanied shanty is merely a more elaborate exploration of the musical device. The episode in *Tristan* is longer and has a place of “honor” in the operatic work. Wagner further crafts the illusion of an “authentic” setting through the careful construction of melodic lines. These lines mimic the natural inconsistencies (and oscillating emotional tone) of an untrained singer; this is consistent with the natural human reaction to a psychologically complicated issue (like that of yearning). Wagner creates these effects through his use of mode mixture, as well as a strategic wavering between major and minor keys in the sailor’s unaccompanied shanty.

One of the most intriguing techniques for creating the illusion of an “authentic” nautical setting involves the use of shanties as atmospheric material; the practice of adding a layer of fictional “reality” between performer and audience, thereby confusing the role of the latter.¹⁰³ This technique does not alter the role of the audience from voyeur to participant, but moves the

¹⁰² “Das deutet schnelle Fahrt! Weh mir! Nahe das Land!” (I.iii.576).

¹⁰³ See similar discussion in Chapter VIII on Benjamin Britten’s *Billy Budd*.

voyeurism “closer” to the action, making it seem as if one were experiencing the events from aboard a nautical vessel as opposed to seats in an opera house.

Operatic “Realism”

It might be necessary, at this point, to outline the implication of “realism” in an art form such as opera. On the one hand, opera always creates a world apart from its audience’s reality. As a result, operatic “realism” can only ever be a term used to describe a temporality existing on stage that mimics aspects of our own realities outside of the opera house. Indeed, Richard Leppert explains that one of opera’s most effective characteristics is that it provides “a momentary alternative to the mundane realities of instrumentalized late-modern life... Art beauty hits hard against lived reality.”¹⁰⁴ Mary Ann Smart takes this one step further and argues that “the very *unreality* of the operatic stage would have been crucial to the genre’s power to engage and energize audiences.”¹⁰⁵

In many instances, artistic works seem to mimic or represent a degree of reality. Leppert demonstrates this in his analysis of *Hearing*, an oil painting by Jan Brueghel the Younger and Jan van Kessel the Elder, where he describes how “nearly all the objects in the room not only are painted with notable precision but also are objects of contemporaneous use: the visual fantasy has its feet planted in a recognizable reality.”¹⁰⁶ Although he is discussing a

¹⁰⁴ Richard Leppert, *Aesthetic Technologies of Modernity, Subjectivity, and Nature: Opera, Orchestra, Phonograph, Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 178-218.

¹⁰⁵ Mary Ann Smart, “A Stroll in the Piazza and a Night at the Opera,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 36/4 (2006), 627.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

work of visual art and not opera specifically, Leppert's point regarding objects and events of "contemporaneous use" as creating a degree of "recognizable reality" is applicable to the broader question of realism existing in an art form. Leppert's argument suggests that opera does not establish a distinct relation to a specific reality, but that it adopts various degrees of "realism" at different moments. This argument is championed by Colin McAlpin, who states that there are "different degrees and various kinds of reality."¹⁰⁷ Although McAlpin is, at this moment, referring to the degrees of reality as distinct and varying between the different art forms ("there is one glory of the plastic, one of the poetic, and another of the musical"), this sentiment remains valid when referring to varying manifestations of realism within a single art form (such as opera).¹⁰⁸ Leppert also hints at this as a possibility, arguing that "late Romantic operas often resonate with dreams and daydreams, no matter their variable quotient of semi-gritty reality."¹⁰⁹

Operatic works must always represent a scene distinct from audience reality, if only because they substitute "singing for speech and [add] the accompaniment of the orchestra into the bargain."¹¹⁰ There is a potential, therefore, for an operatic work to more closely approach the reality of the audience by removing one of these alienating factors. *Sprechstimme* and *Sprechgesangs* represent one foray into the world of simulated speech within operas—as far as one can get from singing while still maintaining the semblance of "opera." However, for Friedrich Nietzsche, even the words that were *sung* within Wagner's *Tristan* served a *quasi*-handicapping function. In his work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, he imagines the opera without words,

¹⁰⁷ Colin McAlpin, "The Reality of the Opera: Part I," *The Musical Times*, 58/891 (1917), 1.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹⁰⁹ Leppert, *Aesthetic Technologies*, 178.

¹¹⁰ Peter Kivy, *Opera Talk: A Philosophical 'Phantasie'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 67.

stating that it would be a “tremendous symphonic movement” without the “spasmodic unharnessing of all the wings of the soul” that come as a result of the verbal language.¹¹¹ As this was a controversial “alteration” within the operatic genre (Wagner, for example, disagreed completely with Nietzsche’s statement, believing that “music was compelled to transcend its own absolute formal limits as a sonorous multiplication of language’s rhetoric”), we must seriously consider other characteristics that can be “displaced” from opera with alienating effect.¹¹² The removal of orchestral accompaniment is, of course, another option. The inclusion of orchestral silence is a way in which to remain true to the designation “opera” while still attempting to reduce the lacuna between the audience’s reality and the “reality” upon the stage.

At the beginning of Senta’s Ballade in *Der fliegende Holländer*, Wagner silences the orchestra as Senta sings a series of open fifths, mimicking the *leitmotif* that is associated with the character (and the ship) of The Flying Dutchman. The loss of the orchestra at this crucial moment creates an eerie effect as it increases, somewhat paradoxically, a sense of the opera’s “realism.” Orchestral accompaniment often serves as a barrier—a constant reminder to the audience that the opera exists in a different “reality.” Its removal can therefore draw Senta’s character closer to the reality of the audience. This characteristic of momentarily enhanced “realism” makes Senta’s obsession with the spectral, piratical figure even more palpable. The silence also increases the intimacy of Senta’s vocal line, forcing the audience into an almost voyeuristic role as they watch Senta reveal her innermost fantasies and dreams. Luckily, Wagner quickly resumes the orchestral accompaniment, allowing the audience once more to

¹¹¹ Harold Mah, *Enlightenment Phantasies: Cultural Identity in France and Germany, 1750-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 105.

¹¹² Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 16.

return to the “comfortable,” expected role of observer, separated by the disparity between the realities of audience and stage.

As we saw, Wagner makes more use of orchestral silence in *Tristan*. In the unaccompanied sailor’s song from Act I, the use of orchestral silence serves two purposes: firstly, as was the case with Senta’s Ballade in *Der fliegende Holländer*, Wagner is unifying the realities of performer and observer by invoking the traditional unaccompanied form of the lyrical, mournful sea ballade (as it might have appeared in its “natural” habitat, on board a sea vessel). However, this merging of realities is not as unsettling as at the beginning of Senta’s Ballade. In this case, the orchestral silence does not serve to increase the intimacy of the sailor’s line, but to enhance the “authenticity” of the opera’s initial nautical setting by means of a dramatically “effective” performance convention. Second, the orchestral silence allows Wagner to convey a sense of ambiguity within the vocal line since, at this point of the opera, we are as unsure of the opera’s ending as the sailor is of his beloved’s fate. It would be significantly less effective if each key into which the sailor briefly forays were supported by orchestral accompaniment—there would be far less uncertainty and imbalance within the vocal line.

Musical Examples for Tristan und Isolde

EXAMPLE 29: GRACE-NOTE ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE SAILORS' FIRST SEA SHANTY IN ACT I SCENE II.

Hr. in F.

Fag.

Pk.

Gemächlich.

I. Viol.

II. Viol.

Br.

EXAMPLE 30: SAILOR'S UNACCOMPANIED SONG FROM THE BEGINNING OF ACT I.

Mäßig langsam.

Stimme eines jungen Seemanns (aus der Höhe, wie vom Maste her, vernehmbar)

(nachlassend) (etwas gedehnt) (kräftig) (feurig)

Westwärts schweift der Blick; ostwärts streicht das Schiff. Frisch weht der Wind der Heimat zu: mein i-risch Kind, wo weilst du? Sind's deiner Seufzer Wehen, die mir die Segel blähen? Wehe, wehe, du Wind! — Weh, ach wehe, mein Kind! — I-ri-sche Maid, — du wilde, minni-ge

EXAMPLE 31: THE ENGLISH HORN'S SOLO FROM THE BEGINNING OF ACT III.

Musical score for the English Horn's solo from the beginning of Act III. The score consists of six staves of music in G-flat major (three flats). The tempo and dynamics are marked throughout. The first staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic, followed by a crescendo (*cresc.*) and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff continues with piano (*p*) and forte (*f*) dynamics. The third staff features a piano (*p*) dynamic, a molto crescendo (*molto cresc.*), and a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The fourth staff includes a piano (*p*) dynamic and a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The fifth staff has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The sixth staff includes a piano (*p*) dynamic, a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic, and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The tempo markings are: *a tempo*, *poco rall.*, and *molto rit.* The dynamics are: *p*, *cresc.*, *f*, *dim.*, *sf*, *p*, *f*, *dim.*, *p*, *cresc.*, *dim.*, *p*, *molto cresc.*, *ff*, *dim.*, *p*, *cresc.*, *dim.*, *p*, *sf*, *dim.*, *p*, *cresc.*, *f*, *dim.*, *p*, *a tempo*, *p*, *cresc.*, *f*, *dim.*, *p*, *poco rall.*, *molto rit.*, *p*.

EXAMPLE 32: SEA SHANTY THAT INTERRUPTS ISOLDE AND BRANGÄNE'S PLOTTING IN ACT I SCENE III.

Musical score for a sea shanty. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. The first staff is the vocal melody, and the other three staves are the accompaniment. The lyrics are: Ho! He! Ha! He! Ho! He! Ha! He! Ho! he! Ho! Am Un-ter-mast die Se-gel ein! Ho! He! Ho! He! Ha! He! Am Un-ter-mast die Se-gel ein! Ho! He! Ha! He! Ho! He! Ha! He!

VI. The Captain's Apprentice, *and Other Folk Favorites*: Norfolk

Rhapsody No. 1, *by Ralph Vaughan Williams*

In 1905, English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) took a tour of Norfolk, England to collect folk songs. During his time at King's Lynn, a small seaport in Norfolk, he amassed a series of traditional songs entrenched in the seafaring culture of the port town. Vaughan Williams composed three Rhapsodies based on his time in Norfolk. The first, which he composed in 1906 and revised in 1914, premiered at Queen's Hall in London in 1906 and is still regularly performed today.¹¹³ The second and third *Norfolk Rhapsodies* were ultimately withdrawn from circulation by the composer. The manuscript for the third rhapsody has been lost, but the score for the second still exists, though with two pages missing.

Unlike any of the composers we have previously encountered, Vaughan Williams used quotations of existing sea shanties and folk songs in his first *Norfolk Rhapsody*: most notably, "The Captain's Apprentice," "On Board a '98," and "A Bold Young Sailor." This decision to utilize "authentically" nautical sea songs enables us to unequivocally include this instrumental work as an example of a Classical composition unquestionably influenced by the sea shanty.

The seafaring song in Vaughan William's first *Norfolk Rhapsody*, "The Captain's Apprentice," is based on the criminal case of a nineteenth century whale skipper from King's Lynn who was charged with the murder of his apprentice.¹¹⁴ The story began to circulate

¹¹³ The revisions included thinning out the orchestration and supplying the piece with an entirely new ending. See Ian Frederick Edward Bates, *Generalized Diatonic Modality and Ralph Vaughan Williams' Compositional Practice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 139.

¹¹⁴ See lyrics in *Appendix*.

through the East Anglian countryside in the form of a ballad, eventually serving as inspiration for many writers and composers. The poet George Crabbe (1778–1851), for example, was extremely interested in the case, and based a poem (Letter XXII, *Peter Grimes*) from *The Borough* (1810), on the story; this poem was eventually used as the basis for Benjamin Britten’s opera of the same name.¹¹⁵ The ballad describes the tragic fate of a pauper child who is murdered by his own captain after being forced by his parents to apprentice as a cabin-boy.

Following a brief introduction evoking the pastoral Norfolk landscape, the first phrases of “The Captain’s Apprentice” (see Example 34) are introduced in a *quasi*-improvisatory manner by a solo viola in mm. 18. This is later repeated in a less improvisatory manner by the oboes in mm. 36. Throughout the piece, Vaughan Williams intersperses motifs from the introduction to create a sense of unity and cohesion. For instance, the rhythmic motif that appears in the woodwinds in the second measure returns frequently (see Example 35). Vaughan Williams transforms his motifs in a Wagnerian manner (by means of fragmentation, rhythmic augmentation, diminution, and other such techniques). For example, the woodwinds’ rhythmic motif from the introduction is often augmented when it returns later in the piece. Such motivic expansion demonstrates the degree of manipulation and integration available in themes as structurally and melodically simple as traditional song forms. Vaughan William’s motivic manipulation demonstrates the “authentic” malleability of the sea shanty. Just as a shanty would rarely be sung exactly the same way on every ship (often with varying melodic inflections or altered lyrics), the shanty themes in Vaughan Williams’ work appear slightly different with every new iteration.

¹¹⁵ See Chapter VIII.

On Board a '98 is a less established sea shanty. Its tune (see Example 36) is particularly less recognizable because contemporary folk singers have taken it upon themselves to set the lyrics collected by Vaughan Williams to tunes of their own. For instance, Peter Bellamy (1944–1991), an English folk singer, reportedly found the tune collected by Vaughan Williams to be “unimpressing”:

A fine set of words was collected in Norfolk by Vaughan Williams, together with an unimpressing tune. I have written for it this tune, which I feel is more in keeping with the strength of the lyric.¹¹⁶

To this day, Bellamy’s version of the song, complete with his replacement of the tune, is one of the most common renditions of the sea shanty. The lyrics themselves, which have remained relatively unaltered by the changeable preferences of times, tell the tale of an eighteen-year-old boy who is sent by his parents to serve aboard a ‘98.¹¹⁷

The original lively tune of *On Board a '98* is introduced in mm. 98 of Vaughan Williams’ first *Norfolk Rhapsody*, over an E-pedal by the bassoons and cellos. In the initial presentation of the theme, Vaughan Williams experiments with half-steps and modal inflections through the inclusion of F-sharps at weak intervallic locations. Such experimentation simultaneously echoes the previous E-minor theme, and foreshadows a movement towards the Dorian mode of A minor.¹¹⁸ In mm. 81–82 of the *Rhapsody*, a point of harmonic interest appears in the form of a brief *Phrygian* tonicization (see Example 37). Although this tonicization is relatively inconsequential within the scope of the composition, it is a clear example of Vaughan Williams’

¹¹⁶ Peter Bellamy, Liner notes of *Wake the Vaulted Echoes* (Free Reed Records, 1999), i.

¹¹⁷ A ‘98, at this time, was a Second-Class Man of War: a frigate armed with ninety-eight cannons.

¹¹⁸ In his dissertation *Generalized Diatonic Modality*, Bates suggests that a concrete movement into the Dorian mode occurs in mm. 120, following the establishment of F-sharps at “strong intervallic locations.”

tendency to emphasize the importance of half-steps within a key. We have come across such methods of chromatic exploration in a majority of the works that we have examined thus far. In this case, the minimal lowering of F-sharp to F-natural means the difference between the E-*Aeolian* and *Phrygian* modes. Such tonal divergences create a degree of tension within the harmonic lines. These moments of harmonic tension contribute to the fleeting of drama and excitement that is believed inherent in the sub-genre of “Classical nautical.”

The third sea song, *A Bold Young Sailor* was sung to Vaughan Williams in 1905 by a fisherman of “about seventy-years old” named Mr. Anderson.¹¹⁹ The sea ballad has, at various times, been revised to refer to other professions; *A Brisk Young Cropper* and *A Rich Young Farmer* are two such variants. However, the version that Vaughan Williams initially transcribed tells the tale of a maid who has fallen in love with a sailor.¹²⁰ Unlike the previous two sea songs, the melody of *A Bold Young Sailor* (see Example 38) does not get its own thematic section in the *Rhapsody*. Instead, in mm. 154, Vaughan Williams intersperses the tune of the sea ballad with that of the *On Board a '98* sea shanty to create a fugal interchange between the two sea songs.

Throughout the *Rhapsody*, Vaughan Williams attempts to recreate the *impromptu*, *quasi*-improvisational feeling of a sea song within the more restrictive Classical context. One primary example of this is the frequently changing time signature. This is by no means a radical technique. Béla Bartók (1881-1945) experimented with similar techniques when adapting folk-songs to Classical contexts around the same time. While Bartók is celebrated as the Classical chronicler of traditional Eastern European folk melodies, Vaughan Williams is not often

¹¹⁹ Edgar Samuel, “Vaughan Williams and King’s Lynn,” *English Dance and Song*, 34/3 (1972), 23.

¹²⁰ See lyrics in *Appendix*.

recognized for the extensive work he undertook in chronicling the melodies of traditional British maritime music.

Just as the other compositions that we have examined served to expand the reach of the sea shanty, the impetus behind the composition of the *Norfolk Rhapsodies* was Vaughan Williams' "need to give these tunes a wider circulation by incorporating them into orchestral rhapsodies, in the manner of Dvořák (1841-1904) and Liszt."¹²¹ Furthermore, Vaughan Williams' work not only increased the accessibility of the sea shanty but also served as an aural demonstration of the degree to which sea songs became integrated into a cultural landscape. The first *Norfolk Rhapsody*, which functions as an auditory recreation of the pastoral Norfolk scene, is imbued with a variety of sea shanties and ballads. Just as these sea songs pervade the musical atmosphere of the *Rhapsody*, so too has maritime tradition been integrated into the lives of those living in close proximity to the sea.

Vaughan Williams, in his collection of nautical folk song, demonstrates a societal movement towards nostalgia distinct from that which we encountered with Wagner and, to a lesser extent, Purcell. For Wagner and Purcell, nostalgia was motivated by society's collective desire for adventure—the driving force for public preoccupation with romantic figures like the Swashbuckler. Vaughan Williams' nostalgia, on the other hand, arose from a communal longing for the past, likely arising during a moment that was full of strife and turmoil. In his accumulation of national folk songs, Vaughan Williams was searching not only for a sense of national identity for himself, but also for a kernel of hope for his nation. Folk music is a means to inhabit a time distinct of our own. As we will discuss more in the following chapter, this characteristic of vicariousness is often evoked by composers during turbulent times.

¹²¹ Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1994), 84.

Musical Examples for Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1

EXAMPLE 34: THEME OF *THE CAPTAIN'S APPRENTICE* FROM MM. 36-43 AS IT APPEARS IN THE OBOE.



EXAMPLE 35: THE "RHYTHMIC MOTIF" FROM MM. 2-3 AS IT APPEARS IN THE WOODWINDS.



EXAMPLE 36: TUNE OF *ON BOARD A '98* FROM MM. 98-113 AS IT APPEARS IN THE BASSOONS AND CELLS.



EXAMPLE 37: PIANO REDUCTION OF MM. 80-82.

E-aeolian: iv i VII E-phrygian: I IV

EXAMPLE 38: FIRST PHRASE OF *A BOLD YOUNG SAILOR*.

A bold young sail - - or court - - ed me, and
stole a - way my li - - ber - ty;

VII. Jingoistic Tendencies and the Unifying Effect of Sorrow: Billy Budd, by Benjamin Britten

Billy Budd, Benjamin Britten's sixth opera, is based on Herman Melville's (1819-1891) short novel, *Billy Budd, Foretopman* (published posthumously in 1924). The musical work, which premiered at the Royal Opera House (Covent Garden) in 1951, was a collaboration between Britten (1913-1976) and his two librettists: E. M. Forster (1879-1970), and Eric Crozier (1914-1994). The opera is set late in the eighteenth century, during the time of the French Revolutionary Wars. It outlines the brief tenure of its eponymous protagonist on board the H.M.S. *Indomitable*, a seventy-four-gun Man of War. At the climax of the opera, the warship's master-at-arms, John Claggart, becomes envious of Billy Budd and accuses him of mutiny. Billy, a stutterer who can only express himself clearly through song, is unable to defend his innocence and strikes Claggart, killing him on the spot. Billy is subsequently hanged at the insistence of the ship's captain, Vere. The libretto of the work is particularly unusual for two reasons. First, for the most part, it is written in prose, reportedly because "Forster considered himself incapable of writing poetry"; and second, because it contains no roles for women.¹²² In adapting Melville's novel, the opera establishes stark binaries that pervade the human existence: major and minor, good and evil, light and shadow, memory and reality, and so on.

In the opening Prologue, Captain Vere ominously invokes the tone of duality in the work; in reflecting upon his life, he laments that "there is always some flaw in it, some defect, some imperfection in the divine image" (mm. 32-36). The Captain ruminates upon the notion of

¹²²Charles Osborne, *The Opera Lover's Companion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 66.

good and evil, eventually concluding that everything must contain some element of the latter. At the end of the Prologue, his thoughts turn to the year 1797, during his time on the *Indomitable*.

The first sea shanty motif of the opera appears early on in mm. 19 of Act I Scene i (see Example 39). Britten's sea shanties are unusual in that they are supremely mournful, unlike those found in the nautically-imbued operas of Purcell or Wagner. He uses his shanties to bring the sailors together in a lament and the fictional crew of the *Indomitable* achieves comradeship through suffering. Even though it is based on the interval of the perfect fifth, this sea shanty, "O heave!" has a somber tone. Like much of *Billy Budd*, this theme is indicative of Britten's fascination with "tonal stratification," which takes place when there is a distinct division of tonal textures that exist in independent textural "strata" while maintaining a relationship to one another and demonstrating a definite sense of pitch hierarchy.¹²³ Britten creates dissonance by superimposing a perfect fifth between f-sharp and c-sharp above a D-pedal, forming a major seventh chord that is significant for two reasons. First, it draws the ear away from the c-sharp towards the d-natural resolution in a movement reminiscent of the "yearning" motifs from *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tristan und Isolde*. Britten, like Wagner, adopts a Romantic approach in setting the tone of nautical life as one imbued with yearning. This strategy suggests that musical figures which create a sense of longing—such as the *appoggiatura* and the *cambiata*—are significant to the depiction of nautical life within the tradition of Classical music. Second, Britten's emphasis on the perfect fifth within the major seventh chord exemplifies the opera's theme of stark binaries. While the sailors are singing the stable and "satisfying" interval of a perfect fifth, it is shadowed by the major seventh chord, a sonority with a high degree of

¹²³ Philip Rupprecht, "Tonal Stratification and Uncertainty in Britten's Music," *Journal of Music Theory*, 40/2 (1996), 311-346.

tension.¹²⁴ This first sea shanty sets the tone of the work by establishing two major theme of the opera: yearning and conflict. Furthermore, the mournful quality of “O heave!” can be attributed to Britten’s need to establish a maritime ambiance while simultaneously maintaining the melancholic atmosphere of the tale. This sea shanty theme returns frequently throughout the opera to cast a gloomy shadow over the work.

The perfect fifth is an interval of significance in both maritime and martial history. This interval is also emphasized in calls such as “Boat-ahoy” (mm. 198 of Act I Scene i), where Britten introduces another key feature of the Classical evocation of the nautical genre. The motif from Britten’s first shanty is similar to the “Capitän” theme of *Der fliegende Holländer*, as well as the Witches’ call to “Appear!” in the second act of *Dido and Aeneas*. The perfect fifth is an interval of particular importance to both maritime and martial culture, where commands and announcements were often made in attention-grabbing intervallic leaps that would be facile for the everyday vocalist. For example, the perfect fifth is particularly significant in “Taps,” one of the most recognizable melodies in the genre of military music (see Example 40).¹²⁵

The abundance of the perfect fifth is one small example of Britten’s interest in extracting “authentic” details from nautical tradition and inserting them at moments where they might enrich the maritime atmosphere onstage. Such techniques were important not only because they afforded a sense of legitimacy to an operatic work, but also because works like

¹²⁴ “Chords with sevenths systematically have greater roughness than chords without sevenths... seventh chords will be associated with more tension than triads.” See Emmanuel Bigand, et al. “Perception of Musical Tension in Short Chord Sequences: The Influence of Harmonic Function, Sensory Dissonance, Horizontal Motion, and Musical Training,” *Perception & Psychophysics*, 58/1 (1996), 129.

¹²⁵ Major Stephen D. Driskill, *Military Ethnomusicology: Understanding the Positive Impact of Music on the United States Military within the American Society* (Quantico: United States Marine Corps, 2010).

Billy Budd were instrumental in disseminating “authentic” nautical culture to the masses, thereby contributing to society’s knowledge of the maritime.

Britten draws from a number of sea-shanty traditions in order to further imbue his work with a sense of legitimacy. Andrew Porter explains that the vocal phrases uttered by the *Indomitable*’s crew are “in the idiom of sea shanties,” and that the orchestral score is suggestive of life aboard a ship, often reminiscent of the whistling of wind through a rigging or the call of a bugle.¹²⁶ These musical evocations of nautical atmosphere are not uncommon, but Britten also demonstrates a knowledge of more obscure shanty traditions. For example, his second sea shanty, which appears in Act I Scene i (mm. 195), is the development of a preceding motif. The ship’s boatswain directs the crew’s labor and orders the sailors to hoist the yard “and sway.” This latter direction is taken up by the crew and is used as motivic basis for the second sea shanty, which consists of the words “and sway” sung in a rocking manner (see Example 41). In this way, Britten imbues the composition with a sense of legitimacy as adoption of the most recently given order into a sea shanty is in line with traditional maritime practice. Heather Vose, for instance, explains that “quick-fire orders that methodically directed a crew to perform heavy physical tasks, also directed the shantyman’s mind to a range of favorite songs from which he’d make an instant selection.”¹²⁷ In the case of Britten’s second sea shanty, the orders are not only used as inspiration for the selection of an existing sea shanty, but also as the basis of the sea shanty itself. Similarly to many of the sea-shanty themes in Wagner’s nautically-imbued works, Britten’s sea shanty develops from a motif that does not originally function as a maritime work song. Unlike our Wagnerian examples, however, the inspiration for Britten’s sea shanty is not initially a song itself. This suggests that life at sea requires a sailor to find

¹²⁶ Andrew Porter, “Britten’s ‘Billy Budd,’” *Music & Letters*, 33/2 (1952), 114.

¹²⁷ Vose, “Song My Father Taught Me,” 110.

music, inspiration, and entertainment out of small things, even something as unpleasant as a barked order.

Britten includes several instances of forebitters—sea “shanties” existing outside their traditional function of labor.¹²⁸ In mm. 655 of Act I Scene i, the crew sings a lamentful song as they mourn for a whipped shipmate (see Example 42). The song “We’re lost forever” is a forebitter because it is sung during the crew’s “free time,” outside of the realm of work. This forebitter is one of several shanty-*esque* motifs that function beyond the conventional reach of a traditional sea shanty.

A primary characteristic of the sea shanty is that it serves to bring a crew together. In *Billy Budd*, however, Britten rejects many of the “required” characteristics of the traditional sea shanty: fast-paced momentum, joyful (or otherwise rousing) atmosphere, use during labor, etc. However, at every point in this opera, Britten ignores the identity of forebitters as folksong, instead using them to unify the crew. This suggests an individual take on the hierarchy of characteristics within the musical genre; namely, that the characteristic of creating unity is more “shanty-like” than its identity as a work song.

Britten includes another forebitter in mm. 855 near the end of Act I Scene i. It takes place as the crew rally together in a celebration of their Captain, “Starry Vere” (see Example 43). Like the earlier forebitter, “Starry Vere” exemplifies Britten’s hierarchy of sea shanty characteristics. Once more, he places the function of unification above the requirement that the song be performed during an act of labor. This second forebitter occurs after Billy asks: “What’s the Captain like?” (mm. 847-848). In the resulting discussion during which the sailors declare Vere “the best of them all” (mm. 859-860), the crew latches on to thematic cells—

¹²⁸ See page 17 for previous discussion of forebitters.

statements made during the discussion—and turns them into a quasi-sea-shanty. In this case, they do not adopt a melodic motif as much as a general, thematic concept. In other words, the crew tends to elaborate on the preceding sentiment rather than reiterating the exact melody or words.

Britten's work makes a case for the classification of forebitters as a sea shanty. His shanty use seems to suggest that, due to the inherent nature of life aboard a nautical vessel, sailors are always on duty. This is either a conscious rejection of the "requirement" of labor for a sea shanty to qualify as such or a result of opera's inherent tendency to represent most modes of life as musical.

Billy Budd also offers an interesting perspective on the general topic of "authentic" settings. As discussed in earlier chapters, the unaccompanied setting of a sea shanty in Classical music is not unusual. We find examples of this in the unaccompanied sailor's song in Act I of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, as well as in the brief orchestral silences at the outset of Senta's *Ballade* in Act II of *Der fliegende Holländer*. In such cases, a lack of accompaniment gives the operatic sea shanty a degree of "authenticity" that might otherwise be difficult to attain. Britten's technique for creating an "authentic" atmosphere departs from Classical operatic convention (found in works of composers like Wagner) in that he relies upon the *addition* of a musical device as opposed to a *subtraction*. Typically, in Britten's work, when characters of the opera are conducting conversations that are seemingly irrelevant to the day-to-day workings of a nautical vessel, there is an indistinct auditory stratum of "sea-shanty" music beneath the soloists. At many points in *Billy Budd*, shanty-*esque* repetitions of the words "heave" or "high-ho" are present as accompaniment (see Example 44). This role of the sea shanty is a structural manifestation of Britten's general attitude regarding the "charm" of the folksong; namely, that

although they “seldom have any striking rhythms or memorable melodic features... they creep into the affectations rather than take them by storm.”¹²⁹

While the “heave” shanty initially appears as primary melodic content, it often provides both harmonic and atmospheric support. Britten creates one of the most authentic settings of the maritime musical form through the addition of this underlying canvas of repetition (the sea shanty in its simplest form). The “authenticity” of such a setting is augmented by the fact that the majority of Britten’s “soloistic” lines are not conventionally melodic, instead mimicking patterns of speech. This “naturalness of declamation,” according to Porter, indicates the influence of Purcell, who, like Britten, developed dialectal mannerisms in his settings, “using mis-thrown accents and several florid notes to one syllable.”¹³⁰ The incorporation of a “lyrical” sea shanty beneath *Sprechstimme*-like “melodic” lines also holds relevance within the overall theme of stark binaries within the story of *Billy Budd* as laid out by both Britten and Melville.

One of the most striking differences between Britten’s work and compositions examined in earlier chapters of this thesis is that Britten’s nautical subjects no longer rely upon the fantastical imagination and exaggeration of pirate lore; instead, they tend towards depictions of the gritty, shadowy realms of maritime life. This drastic and revolutionary alteration of perspective indicates a societal shift towards an increased appreciation of authenticity in contrast to Romanticized portrayals. While the traditional Swashbuckler identity depicts piratical protagonists through magical adventures, Britten’s nautical universe focuses on the manner in which darkness pollutes every element of light. This darker presentation is indicative of the pessimism which often permeates a cultural landscape during (or following)

¹²⁹ Benjamin Britten, *Britten on Music*, ed. Paul Francis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 32.

¹³⁰ See Porter, “Britten’s ‘Billy Budd,’” 118.

times of strife and war.¹³¹ Such moments in history are also accompanied by a general societal distaste for rose-tinting and Romanticism. In demonstrating such sentiments, works like Britten's reflect the cultural climate of a nation.

Parallels exist between the opera's evident disillusionment with idealism and the specific characters of Billy Budd and Vere. The work is, to some degree, a cautionary tale of the sorrowful ends that await those who are starry-eyed and blind to the harsh "realities" of the universe. "All a poet can do is warn," reads Wilfred Owen's epigraph on the score of Britten's *War Requiem*, and Britten seems to have taken this to heart.¹³² The ill-fated eponymous protagonist of the opera is not able to let go of his idealism and he is ultimately punished for it.¹³³ Starry Vere, although more fortunate in that he survives the events on board the *Indomitable*, has the misfortune of losing hope in the "goodness" and morality of life, serving as

¹³¹ Britten was heavily affected by the bellicose atmosphere in Europe, as well as the societal stigmas associated with his sexuality. Philip Brett explains how Britten pursued "a fairly incisive and certainly passionate line on the linked issues of pacifism and homosexuality in relation to subjectivity, nationality and the institutions of the capitalistic democracy under which he lived." See Brett, *Music and Sexuality in Britten* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 184.

¹³² Ibid., 184.

¹³³ Some critics have seen *Billy Budd* as a tale of ultimate salvation, drawing the connection between Britten's work and Wagner's obsession with redemption. Arguments have been made that by refusing to relinquish his ideals, Billy Budd retains purity of soul and is redeemed in the afterlife, and that Vere himself is redeemed by Billy's final words of forgiveness. I am more inclined more to agree with scholars like Arnold Whittall, who argues that "it is the inevitable triumph of doubt over certainty that is the 'moral' [of *Billy Budd*], not the simple banishment of guilt through forgiveness." See Arnold Whittall, "'Twisted Relations': Method and Meaning in Britten's *Billy Budd*," *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 2/2 (1990), 171). For discussions of redemption in Billy Budd, see Michael Fuller, "The Far-Shining Sail: A Glimpse of Salvation in Britten's *Billy Budd*," *The Musical Times*, 147/1895 (2006), 17-24; Barry Emslie, "'Billy Budd' and the Fear of Words," *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 4/1 (1992), 43-59.

a warning against the adoption of doomed optimism—a dismal message from a composer heavily disheartened by the wars and stigmas of his time.

EXAMPLE 42: FIRST FORECASTLE SHANTY AS IT APPEARS IN THE PARTS OF THE NOVICE AND CREW IN MM. 684-693, ACT I SCENE I.

Novice

We're lost - for - e - ver on - the - end - less sea.

Crew

We're lost - for - e - ver, we're lost for - e - ver, all -

We're - all of us lost.

of us lost, - we're - all of us lost - for - e - ver on - the - end - less sea, -

EXAMPLE 43: SECOND FORECASTLE SHANTY AS IT APPEARS IN MM. 895-904, ACT I SCENE I.

Sta-rry, Sta-rry Vere, He's the salt of the earth. We'll fo-llow Vere, right through the gates of Hell.

An Education in Nautical Negligence: Peter Grimes, by Benjamin Britten

Benjamin Britten was inspired by works of literature throughout his compositional career. During the summer of 1941, he came across an issue of *The Listener* where he encountered E. M. Forster's article on George Crabbe (the Suffolk poet briefly mentioned in Chapter VII, in relation to Vaughan Williams' first *Norfolk Rhapsody*).¹³⁴ This literary encounter exacerbated Britten's homesickness, which was extremely fervent during his time in America (between 1939-1942), and served as Britten's introduction to Crabbe's works. Britten was particularly inspired by Crabbe's *The Borough* (1810), a collection of poems where each chapter is centered on the life of an individual. In this work, Britten found inspiration for the ill-fated anti-hero of his first opera, *Peter Grimes*. Britten and his librettist, Montagu Slater (1902-1956), modified the character, bringing more emotional depth to that of Crabbe's clear-cut "ruffian."¹³⁵ In the hands of Britten and Slater, *Peter Grimes* is a dreamer.¹³⁶ This characteristic leads to a number of tragic events, resulting in Grimes' insanity and ultimate death.

The opera, which is set in a Suffolk coastal village, consists of a prologue and three acts. The curtain rises on an inquest where Grimes is being questioned for his role in the death of his first apprentice. In the outraged clamor that ensues, it is clear that the townspeople believe that Grimes' negligence is equivalent to guilt, and he is strongly advised not to obtain another

¹³⁴ Brett, *Music and Sexuality in Britten*, 12.

¹³⁵ Such modifications have inspired parallels between Britten's Grimes and Alban Berg's infamous *Wozzeck*, one of the most notorious examples of the anti-hero in twentieth-century opera. See John Cordingly's book, *Disordered Heroes in Opera* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2001) for an in-depth description of *Wozzeck* and Grimes' similar personality disorders.

¹³⁶ There are certain critics who label him less sympathetically. Eric Walter White, for example, describes Grimes as "a maladjusted aggressive psychopath" (Brett, *Music and Sexuality in Britten*, 13).

apprentice. Grimes ignores this advice and engages a second boy, John. It becomes clear that Grimes is not only negligent, but aggressive and violent as well. In the second act, Grimes loses control and strikes Ellen Orford, a townswoman towards whom he is affectionate, and it is insinuated that Grimes has been beating John. Following this revelation, Grimes and John are heading towards the water when the boy slips, falling to his death. Once this second death is discovered, the townspeople are outraged and go off in search of Grimes. The threatening mob, compounded by the deaths of both apprentices, shatters Grimes' sanity. After less-than-subtle encouragement from some of the townspeople, Grimes takes his boat out to sea and sinks it, drowning himself in the process. The curtain sets as the townsfolk carry on with their daily activities, as if nothing has happened.

As in *Billy Budd*, Britten's use of sea shanties in *Peter Grimes* shows a diversity of function. In *Billy Budd*, he highlights the melancholy possibilities of the sea shanty; in *Peter Grimes*, he takes this a step further and emphasizes the alienating characteristics that can pervade this maritime musical form. Throughout this thesis, we have approached the sea shanty from the perspective of individuals who are bound together in song. However, as with any attempt at community inclusion, isolation for some becomes inevitable. In *Peter Grimes*, this is realized in its protagonist's state of seclusion from the townsfolk. Generally, if a sea shanty is in use, it functions to demonstrate that Grimes is separate from the group.¹³⁷ Indeed, the chorus

¹³⁷ The sub-textual reason for Grimes' "otherness" is often attributed to a supposed desire, on Britten's part, to depict attitudes and implication of sexual alienation. Brett famously argued that the opera demonstrates "the crime that hardly dare speak its name... the homosexual condition." See Brett, *Music and Sexuality in Britten*, 20. Whether one agrees with this or not, the relatability of Grimes' alienation is incontrovertible. J. P. E. Harper-Scott explains, "whatever the motivation or character of Grimes, the strength of Britten's conception means that his analysis of oppression speaks to the very widest range of human experience." See "Being-with Grimes: The Problem of Others in Britten's First Opera," in *Art*

as a whole seems to function as demonstrations of Grimes' "otherness." For example, in the famous "mad scene" (Act III Scene ii), Grimes performs a disjointed aria made up of melodic fragments from earlier scenes of the opera. Once more, we encounter orchestral silence used as a tool to indicate an element of plot to the audience. In this scene, Grimes addresses the audience alone, often unsupported by the orchestra, displaying an auditory separation that mimics his own disjunction from society. This moment of crazed solitude is continuously peppered with the voices of the townspeople as they hauntingly call Grimes' name. While it is unclear as to whether these communal calls are in Grimes' head or not, they certainly contribute to his increasing madness; his state of insanity is itself made clear through abrupt contrasts between legato lines and startlingly choppy vocal textures. Behind these devices of depicted madness, society as a whole (represented by the quietly growing chorus) seems to haunt him. In this instance, Grimes is not included in the overarching umbrella of unity inherent in both choruses and shanties—a fact which contributes significantly to his ultimate downfall.

In many ways, this opera is a tragic tale of insignificance. This is confirmed in the final scene, where the townspeople are unaffected (and even content) with Grimes' absence. As we discussed earlier, Peter Grimes' "otherness" is demonstrated to the audience by means of subtle musical techniques. Arnold Whittall observes that the struggle between Grimes' desires and Grimes' reality is demonstrated through "an exploitation of tritonal and semitonal opposition."¹³⁸ As with any opera, music in *Peter Grimes* is important. However, a significant

and *Ideology in European Opera*, ed. Rachel Cowgill, David Cooper, and Clive Brown (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2010), 362–381.

¹³⁸ Arnold Whittall, *The Music of Britten and Tippett* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 102.

aspect of this particular work is that the score not only shapes the text, but also reveals an aspect of Grimes' psyche to which the rest of the characters are not privy. Because of this, critics like Hans Keller view Grimes as a paradigm of the tragically misunderstood, noting that Grimes "cannot show, let alone prove his tenderness as easily as his wrath—except through the music, which, alas, the people on stage don't hear."¹³⁹ The opera is transformed, by this feature, into a "study" of two worlds: reality and Grimes' fantasy.

Like many composers, Britten is a consistent challenger of convention in his compositions. This is no less the case in *Billy Budd* and *Peter Grimes*. *Billy Budd* challenges traditional ideas regarding the sea shanty's method of unification; Britten reminds us that unification can take place just as easily through sorrow and pain as with joy or patriotism. *Peter Grimes*, despite being the older of the two works, is even more innovative in its unconventional use of the shanty.

As the adage goes, there is nothing like a war to unite a country. While this idea might not have appealed to Britten's pacifistic tendencies, its overall import is applicable to this particular opera. In many ways, a unification of ideals and general sentiments is unnecessary for a town as insular and uniform as that which provides the opera's setting. Britten's inclusion of sea shanties seems to be driven by a need to demonstrate the degree to which Grimes is shunned by the townsfolk. The townspeople must present, for the case of the plot, a unified front against the one, misfortunate Grimes.

In the spirit of textual brevity, I have refrained from extensive musical analysis in this subchapter. For interesting discussions of musical techniques in Britten's *Grimes*, see Whittall's *The Music of Britten and Tippett*, Philip Rupprecht's *Britten's Musical Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Harper-Scott's "Being-with Grimes," and Brett's *Music and Sexuality in Britten*.

¹³⁹ Brett, *Music and Sexuality in Britten*, 14.

In this manner, *Peter Grimes* successfully portrays the sense of national identity that Britten felt during his years away from home (a strength of patriotism that can only be fully comprehended by fellow expatriates). The opera is also a display of society's desire and preoccupation for national identity—a direct demonstration of war's effect upon citizens of involved nations. During such times of turmoil, collective thinking shifts from being more individualistic to being more cooperative. Issues are discussed in terms of “We, as a Nation” versus “I, as an Individual.” Methods of establishing national identity are thus more in demand, and sea shanties, as a subset (or close relative) of the folk song, are ideal for conveying the identity of a nation like Britain, for whom the nautical held so much significance.

VIII. The Future of the Classical Maritime Genre

Each of the works examined in this thesis disseminate nautical culture through a stylization of the shanty. Purcell and Wagner establish the genre of Classical maritime music, thereby bringing artistic visions of nautical cultures to mainland Western societies. As one of the earliest presentations of the Swashbuckler in Classical music, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* establishes the sub-genre of Classical maritime music. Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tristan und Isolde* indirectly continue Purcell's work in Romanticizing nautical life. Liszt carries this even further by expanding maritime music's reach from formal Classical venues to parlors and less "ceremonious" performance spaces. Vaughan Williams and Britten, facilitating the transition from Romanticization towards "authenticity," emphasize aspects of nautical culture that were "legitimate" or "accurate." Vaughan Williams, departing from the movement of Romanticism in favor of nostalgia-driven "authenticity," aids in the expansion of the nautical sub-genre and introduced the ideal of legitimacy. This appreciation of "authenticity" over Romanticism is further adapted by Britten in his nautically-themed operas. However, driven by a desire to fashion his operas into cautionary tales about the dangers of idealism, Britten adopts an active role (championing nautical life's grittier aspects) in comparison to Vaughan William's passive one.

These works were, by no means, mainland society's only sources of nautical culture. However, they served to introduce and reinforce characteristics that were beginning to be associated with maritime life in the Western imagination. Just as vertiginous ocean swells are now fundamental to sea-centric Classical works, the sea shanty has become a staple of nautical life in Western eyes (as we have seen with the shanty-laden *Pirates of the Caribbean* series).

These compositions also display a tendency to reflect geo-political movements and concerns; their social influence has extended so far as to incite stark nationalism, fierce rebellion, general dissatisfaction with foreign policy, and so on. This is achieved by means of thematic choice (such as the selection of Byronic Pirate as protagonist) and the use of musical devices like *cambiata* and *appoggiatura*. It is not always easy to see why certain musical choices evoke the scenes and atmospheres that they do. However, a comparison of compositions within a subgenre (e.g. Classical Maritime) allows us more insight into this mystery because we can begin to identify the compositional and thematic specifics that evoke certain sentiments in a listener. That is, we can learn more about music's effect on an audience by examining resemblances between compositions and determining which specific technical elements of a genre create the respective "impressions" that are "floating around" in the aether of our literary, historical, or musical universes. This is namely because such connections suggest established, inadvertent connections that we, as audience members of any art form, make between small details that we note and our perceptions of genre. While the recognition of the "minutiae" within a work might require study or advanced knowledge of a topic, even the most unfamiliar observer can detect the overall effect of properly administered artistic techniques. For example, one might not necessarily have the training or the interest to notice that musical devices designed to delay resolution (e.g. *cambiata*, *appoggiatura*, etc.) are emphasized and placed in positions of significance throughout musical compositions dealing with the maritime. However, what is immediately evident is that a phrase or a theme sounds melancholy or strained. In this way, composers working on a refined level are able to firmly establish their compositions within a desired genre through the use of devices with unequivocal symbolic intent.

Our ultimate goal in the musicological examination of the Classical maritime genre should be to further identify the specific subliminal expectations "coded" into our society's

perception of music and art. In so doing, we can ascertain the extent to which distinctive musical devices or topics indicate psychological societal states and movements of social or political change. This would generate the potential to instigate societal change, manipulate public perception of targeted subjects, and contribute to music's overall relevance within the geo-political sphere.

Glossary

Bilge: The lowest internal section of the ship's hull.

Boatswain: A ship's officer in charge of equipment (on a sailing ship, esp. the sails, rigging, cables, etc.) and the work of the crew on deck ("boatswain, n." Oxford English Dictionary).

Buccaneer: "English, Dutch, or French raiders who preyed on the Spanish, attacking cities as well as ships on the high seas." From the French word *boucan*, which translates to "barbeque." See Konstam, *Pirates: The Complete History*, 9.

Capstan: "A piece of mechanism, working on the principle of the wheel and axle, on a vertical axis, the power being applied by movable bars or levers inserted in horizontal sockets made round the top, and pushed by men walking round, whereby the apparatus is made to revolve and wind up a cable round its cylinder or barrel; it is used especially on board ship for weighing the anchor" ("capstan, n." Oxford English Dictionary).

Corsair: The French term for *privateer*, "although the term later became associated with Mediterranean pirates rather than just privateers." See Konstam, *Pirates, The Complete History*, 9.

Forecastle: "The forward part of the vessel, under the deck, where the sailors live" ("forecastle, n." Oxford English Dictionary).

Galley: "A low flat-built sea-going vessel with one deck, propelled by sails and oars" ("galley, n." Oxford English Dictionary).

Galliot: A smaller galley, designed for speed.

Halyard: "A rope or tackle used for raising or lowering a sail, yard, spar, or flag" ("halyard, n." Oxford English Dictionary).

Kapellmeister: “The leader or conductor of a kappele, chapel choir, or orchestra” (“kappelle, n.” Oxford English Dictionary).

Lateen: A triangular sail, 45-degrees to the mast.

Marooner: From the Spanish word *cimarron*, which roughly translates to “deserter.”

Privateer: “A man... under contract to a government, allowing ‘him’ to attack enemy ships during wartime.” See Konstam, *Pirates: The Complete History*, 8.

Sea dogs, Elizabethan: English privateers who engaged in acts of piracy for the “good” of the nation. Famous examples include John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake.

Shellback: An experienced sailor.

Stevedore: A dockhand whose role it was to load and unload ships.

Thetis: Named after the mother of Achilles, one of the Nereids. “Poetically, the sea personified” (“Thetis, n.” Oxford English Dictionary).

Vertical capstan: A vertical capstan was used to raise and lower the anchor by walking in a circle, pushing at the capstan bars. See Sharon Marie Risko, *19th Century Sea Shanties: From the Capstan to the Classroom* (Cleveland: Cleveland State University, 1999), 13.

Windlass (horizontal) capstan: The shanties accompanying the labor of this apparatus were often used interchangeably with those belonging to the pumps, which emptied water from the bilge. See Sharon Marie Risko, *19th Century Sea Shanties*, 14.

Appendix: Lyrics

i. Lyrics to the “earliest ship shanty in existence” (abridged):

Veyra, veyra, veyra, veyra,
 Gentil gallandis, gentil gallandis.
 Veynde I see him, veynde I see him.
 Pourbossa, pourbossa.
 Hail al ande ane, hail al ande ane.
 Hail hym vp til us, hail hym vp til us.

Caupon caupona, caupon caupona,
Caupon hola, caupon hola,
Caupon holt, caupon holt,
*Sarabossa, sarabossa.*¹⁴⁰

ii. Diagram of Shanty Subcategories:

Hauling shanties

- a. Short-drag (or short-haul) shanties (for raising topgallants and royals).
- b. Halyard (or long-drag) shanties (for raising topsails and topgallants).
- c. Sweating-up, fore-sheet, or bowling songs (for boarding tacks and sheets).
- d. Bunt shanties (for stowing a sail on the yard).

¹⁴⁰ Saunders, “Sailor Songs,” 340.

- e. Hand-over-hand songs (for jibs, staysails, and braces).
- f. Walkaway or stamp-'n'-go songs (for braces, for use with a large crew)

Heaving shanties

- a. Main capstan (or windlass) shanties (for heaving the anchor).
- b. Capstan songs (for raising sail by mechanical means, warping in and out of dock).
- c. Pump shanties.¹⁴¹

iii. Sugar in the Hold (abridged):

Wish I was in Mobile Bay, screwing cotton all of the day,

But I'm stowing sugar in the hold,

Below, below, below

Hey, ho, below, below

Storing sugar in the hold below

Hey, ho, below, below

*Stowing sugar in the hold below*¹⁴²

iv. Haul Away Joe (abridged):

Whin Oi wuz a little boy an' so me mother told me

'Way haul away, we'll haul away Joe!

That if Oi didn't kiss the gals me lips would all grow mouldy.

'Way haul away, we'll haul away Joe! (sim.)

¹⁴¹ Rose, "Nostalgia and Imagination," 151-152.

¹⁴² London Julie, "Maritime Open Sing" (performance, Portsmouth Maritime Folk Festival, Portsmouth, NH, September 24, 2016).

An' Oi sailed the seas for many a year not knowin' what Oi wuz missin',
 Then Oi sets me sails afore the gales an' started in a-kissin'
 Oh, King Louis wuz the King o' France, afore the revolution,
 But the people cut his big head orf an' spoiled his constitution.
 Saint Patrick wuz a gintleman, an' he come of daycent paypul,
 He built a church in Dublin town an' on it set a staypul.
 From Oireland thin he druv the snakes, then drank up all the whisky,
 This made him dance an' sing an' jig, he felt so fine an' frisky.
 Yiz call yerself a second mate an' cannot tie a bowline,
 Ye cannot even stand up straight when the packet she's a-rollin'.¹⁴³

v. Drunken Sailor (abridged):

What shall we do with a drunken sailor,
 What shall we do with a drunken sailor,
 What shall we do with a drunken sailor,
 Early in the morning?
Way, hay, and up she rises,
Way, hay, and up she rises,
Way, hay, and up she rises,
*Early in the morning!*¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Stan Hugill, *Shanties from the Seven Seas: Shipboard Work-songs and Songs used as Work-songs from the Great Days of Sail* (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1994).

¹⁴⁴ William Doerflinger, *Songs of the Sailor and Lumberman* (Glenwood, IL: Meyerbooks, 1990).

vi. Shanghai Brown (abridged):

When first I went to Frisco boys, I went upon a spree,
 My hard earned cash I spent it fast, I got drunk as drunk could be,
 Before me money was all gone, or spent on some old whore,
 I made up me mind and was well inclined to go to sea no more.

No more, no more, to go to sea no more,

I made up me mind and was well inclined to go to sea no more.

They shipped me aboard of a whaling ship bound for the Arctic Sea,
 Where them cold winds blow and the ice and snow would even make Jamaican rum
 freeze,
 I had no clothes, I had no gear, me money spent on a whore,
 T'was then I swore that when on shore I'd go to sea no more.¹⁴⁵

vii. The Captain's Apprentice

A boy to me was bound apprentice
 Because his parents they were poor.
 So I took him from Saint James' Workhouse
 All for to sail on the Greenland shore.
 One day this poor boy he did annoy me.
 Nothing to him then did I say,

¹⁴⁵ "Shanghai Brown," JSWard. http://www.jsward.com/shanty/shanghai_brown (accessed March 20, 2017).

But I rushed him to my frozen yard-arm
 And I kept him there till the very next day.
 When his eyes and his teeth did hang towards me,
 With his hands and his feet bowed down likewise,
 And with a bloody iron bar I killed him
 Because I wouldn't hear his cries.¹⁴⁶

viii. On Board a '98

When I was young and scarce eighteen, I drove a roaring trade,
 And many a sly trick have I played on many a pretty maid.
 Well my parents saw that would not do for I soon should spend their store;
 So they resolved that I should go on board a man-of-war.
 Well, a bold press-gang surrounded me, their warrant they did show,
 They felt that I was go to sea and face the daring foe.
 Then as off they lugged me to the boat, it was then I cursed my fate!
 For then I found that I should float on board a "98."
 And when first I put my foot on board, how I did stand and stare!
 For our Admiral, he gave the word, "There is no time to spare."
 So we weighed our anchor, we shook out sail, and off they bore me straight
 To face the French in storm and gale on board a "98."

¹⁴⁶ Reinhard Zierke, "The Captain's Apprentice," *Mainly Norfolk: English Folk and Other Good Music*.
<https://mainlynorfolk.info/lloyd/songs/thecruelshipscaptain.html> (accessed March 20, 2017).

And as times fled, I bolder grew, I hardened was to war.
 I'd run aloft with my ship's crew and valued not a scar.
 And right well I did my duty do till I got bosun's mate,
 And bless me, soon got bosun too on board a "98."

 So now I can my cocoa take, my pouch with 'bacco stored.
 In my blue coat and my three-cocked hat I am as happy as a Lord,
 Cause I've done my duty, I served my King, and now I bless my fate.
 But bless me, I'm too old to sing. I'm nearly 98.¹⁴⁷

ix. A Bold Young Sailor

A bold young sailor courted me,
 He robbed me of my liberty,
 My liberty and my right good will
 I must confess I love him still.

 There's an ale-house in the town,
 Where my love goes and sits him down;
 And he pulls a strange girl all on his knee
 And isn't that a grief to me.

 A grief to me, and I'll tell you why:
 Because she has more gold than I,

¹⁴⁷ Reinhard Zierke, "On Board a Ninety-eight," *Mainly Norfolk: English Folk and Other Good Music*.
<https://mainlynorfolk.info/peter.bellamy/songs/onboarda98.html> (accessed March 20, 2017).

But the gold it will waste and the beauty blast

And he'll come to a poor girl like me at last.

I wish my baby it was born

Sat smiling on its nurse's knee;

And I myself was in my grave

With the green grass growing over me.

I wish, I wish, but it's all in vain,

I wish I was a maid again.

But a maid again I never will be

Till an apple grows on an orange tree.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Reinhard Zierke, "A Bold Young Sailor," *Mainly Norfolk: English Folk and Other Good Music*
<https://mainlynorfolk.info/lloyd/songs/asailorslife.html> (accessed March 20, 2017).

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